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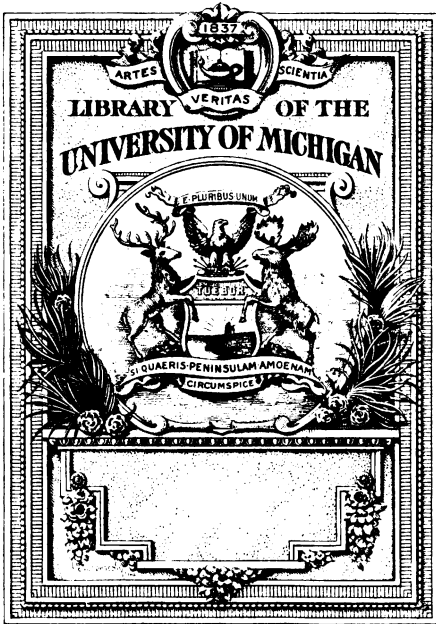
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A
BIOGRAPHICAL HISTORY
OF
43140
PHILOSOPHY.

BY
G. H. LEWES.

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"Man is not born to solve the mystery of Existence; but he must, nevertheless, attempt it, in order that he may learn how to keep within the limits of the Knowable."—GÖTTE.

"For I doubt not through the ages one increasing purpose runs,  
And the thoughts of men are widened by the process of the suns."  
TENNYSON.

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SERIES I.—ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY.
IN TWO VOLUMES.—VOL. I.

LONDON:
CHARLES KNIGHT & Co., LUDGATE STREET.
1845.

PREFACE.

To write the Biography of Philosophy while writing the Biographies of Philosophers is the aim of the following work. The expression "Biography of Philosophy," though novel, may perhaps be pardoned, because it characterizes a novel attempt. There have been numerous histories of philosophical schools: some of these learned and laborious chronicles being little more than a collection of fragments and opinions; others critical estimates of various systems; and others attempting to unite both of these plans. But the rise, growth, and development of Philosophy, as exhibited in these philosophical schools,—in a word, the Life of Philosophy,—has yet, I believe, had no biographer.

My conception of such a task, and the principles which have guided the composition of the present attempt, are stated in the introduction.

It is usual, in presenting to the public a work destined for instruction, to show that such a work is wanted; and, if other works on the subject already exist, to express a proper dissatisfaction at them, as an excuse for one's own audacity. So reasonable a practice invites imitation, even at the risk of appearing presumptuous.

That a History of Philosophy is an important subject may be taken for granted; and, although I by no means claim for the present work that it

should supersede others, I do think that existing works have not rendered it superfluous. Stanley's 'Lives of the Philosophers,' the delight of my boyhood, though a great work, considering the era in which it was produced, had long been obsolete when Dr. Enfield undertook his abridgement of Brucker; and, although the translation of Ritter's 'History of Philosophy' has driven Enfield from the shelves of the learned, yet its cost and voluminousness have prevented its superseding Enfield with the many.

Dr. Enfield was a man equally without erudition and capacity, and he simply abridged the ill-digested work of a man of immense erudition. Brucker was one of the learned and patient Germans, whose industry was so indefatigable that his work can hardly become altogether superseded: it must remain one great source whence succeeding writers will draw. But, although he deserves the title of Father of the History of Philosophy, his want of sagacity, and of philosophical, no less than literary, attainments, effectually prevent his ever again being regarded otherwise than as a laborious compiler. Dr. Enfield's Abridgement possesses all the faults of arrangement and dulness of Brucker's work, to which he has added no inconsiderable dulness and blundering of his own. Moreover, his references are shamefully inaccurate. Yet his book has been reprinted in a cheap form, and extensively bought: it certainly has not been extensively read.

Ritter's 'History of Philosophy' is a work of reputation. This reputation, however, is higher in France and England than in Germany; and the reason is apparent: we have so little of our own upon the subject, that a work like Ritter's is a great acquisition. In Germany they have so many works

of all degrees of excellence and in all styles, that the great advantage of Ritter—his erudition—becomes of very secondary importance, while his deficiencies are keenly felt.

I have been so much indebted to Ritter, during the progress of my own work, that any depreciation of him here would be worse than ingratitude; but let me hope that a calm and honest appreciation of his merits and demerits will not be misunderstood. Ritter is the Brucker of the 19th century: not quite so learned, and not quite so dull; also not quite so calm and impartial. As far as honest labour goes there is no deficiency; but where labour ends his merits end. His exposition is generally purposeless and confused; his historical appreciation, when not borrowed from others, superficial in the extreme; his criticisms heavy and deficient in speculative ability, and the whole work wanting life and spirit. He never rises with the greatness of his subject, and perhaps the very worst portions of his book are those devoted to Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle: and this is the more remarkable because he has diligently studied the writings of the two last. As a collection of materials for a study of the subject, his book is very valuable; but it is only an improved supplement to Brucker.

Beyond the above works I know of none whence the English reader can gain satisfactory information. Essays on distinct portions of the subject are numerous enough; and there have appeared, from time to time, articles in the Reviews, all of more or less ability. There was a connected view of ancient systems from Thales to Plato, given in a series of articles which excited attention in the 'Foreign Quarterly Review,' during 1843 and

1844; and I must also mention the masterly 'Essay on Metaphysical Philosophy' which appeared in the 'Encyclopædia Metropolitana,' eloquent, ingenious, and profound. But all these are buried in voluminous works not always accessible. There still seemed to be an opening for something new, something at once brief and complete.

The present work is not meant as a sketch. It is small: not because materials for a larger were deficient, but because only what was deemed essential has been selected. It would have been easier to let my materials wander out into the diffuse space of bulky quartos or solid-looking octavos; but I have a great dislike to "big books," and have endeavoured to make mine small by concentration. It is no complete list of names that figure in the annals of philosophy; it is no complete collection of miscellaneous opinions preserved by tedious tradition. Its completeness is an *organic* completeness, if the expression may be allowed. Only such thinkers have been selected as represent the various phases of progressive development; and only such opinions as were connected with those phases. I have written the Biography, not the Annals, of Philosophy.

A word or two respecting the execution. I make no pretensions to the character of a *savant*; consequently, as a work of erudition this will appear insignificant beside its predecessors. It is so. But to such works as already exist the greatest erudition can add little, and that little of subsidiary value: I have, therefore, a good excuse for wishing to be measured by a different standard. So little have I desired to give this work an erudite air, that I have studiously avoided using *references* in the

foot-notes whenever their absence was unimportant. The reader will not be sorry to see my pages thus pruned of the idle ostentation which disfigures so many works on this subject; and, if the History look more superficial in consequence, it is some consolation to know that all who are competent to judge will not judge by appearances.*

Such as it is, the erudition is not "second-hand." The passages upon which I have relied, which I have quoted, or referred to, have all been scrupulously verified, when they were not discovered by me. Of course I have liberally availed myself of the industry of others; but can conscientiously declare that in no case have I accepted a passage at second-hand without having previously verified it by the original, whenever that was possible. This is a part of the historian's duty, irksome but indispensable, and very rarely fulfilled even by the erudite.

Let me say, then, once for all, that the List of Books drawn up at the end of this preface comprises all those used by me in the writing of this Series; and, consequently, any citation from, or reference to, an ancient author not included in that List, is to be considered as derived at second-hand, for the exactitude of which I am not responsible.

G. H. L.

* It must not be supposed that I am insensible to the importance of exact references; my own pages will testify to the contrary. I speak only of the abuse of citation.

LIST OF WORKS USED IN THE COMPILATION
OF THIS SERIES.

RITTER AND PRELLER: *Historia Philosophiæ Græco-Romanæ ex fontium locis contexta*. Hamburg, 1838.

(A collection of all the scattered fragments of the early philosophers, arranged historically. A work of the highest utility to the critic and historian. Unfortunately I only possessed it after the completion of my first volume.)

ARISTOTLE: *De Metaphysicâ*. Ed. Tauchnitz. Leipsic, 1832.

(There is a good French translation of this work by MM. Pierron and Zévort, to the notes of which I have been sometimes indebted.)

ARISTOTLE: *De Animâ*. Ed. F. A. Trendelenburg. Jena, 1833.

(The commentary of Trendelenburg is erudite and useful; but I have not always been able to verify his references.)

ARISTOTLE: *De Physicâ*.

De Animâ.

De Cælo.

De Generatione et Corruptione.

De Sensu.

} Paris, 1561.

DIOGENES LAERTIUS. Ed. Tauchnitz. Lipsiæ, 1833.

(There is also a French translation by M. Chauvpié; but it cannot be trusted.)

SEXTUS EMPIRICUS : *Hypotyposes, et Adversos Mathematicos*. Folio, Paris 1621.

(This is not a critical edition ; but it is the only one I possess. It is the first of the Greek text.)

KARSTEN : *Philosophorum Græcorum Operum Reliquiæ*. Pars Prima. *Xenophanes*. Brussels, 1830.
(An excellent work.)

PLATO : Ed. Bekker. *Berlin*, 1828.

(Also four dialogues : Protagoras, Gorgias, Phædrus, and the Apology, which were analysed in a masterly manner in the 'Monthly Repository' from March 1834 to February 1835. From these all extracts which occur in my work have been taken.)

XENOPHON : *Memorabilia*. Ed. Edwards, Oxon., 1785.

HORNIUS : *Historia Philosophica*. Batav., 1756.

BRUCKER : *History of Philosophy*. Abridged by Enfield. London, 1819.

BRUCKER : *Historia Critica Philosophiæ*. Leipzig, 1767.

RITTER : *History of Ancient Philosophy*. 3 vols. English Trans. Oxford, 1838-9.

HEGEL : *Geschichte der Philosophie*. 3 Bände. Ed. Michelet. Berlin, 1833.

(This is rather the Philosophy of History than the History of Philosophy. I have found it suggestive.)

ZELLER : *Die Philosophie der Griechen : ihrer Charakter, Gang, Hauptmomente und Entwicklung*. Erster Theil. *Vorsokratische Philosophie*. Tübingen, 1844.

(Useful. Rather a criticism on other historians than a history.)

TENNEMANN : *Manuel de l'Histoire de la Philosophie*. Par Victor Cousin. 2 vols. Paris, 1830.

(A good abridgement of an able work.)

RENOUVIER: *Manuel de la Philosophie Ancienne*. 2 vols. Paris, 1844.

(A work of learning and acuteness.)

JULES SIMON: *Histoire de l'École d'Alexandrie*. 1st vol. Paris, 1844.

VICTOR COUSIN: *Cours de Philosophie*. 3 vols. Bruxelles, 1840.

V. COUSIN: *Nouveaux Fragmens Philosophiques*. 1 vol. Bruxelles, 1840.

Encyclopædia Metropolitana,—article, *Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy*.

BAYLE: *Dictionnaire Historique*.

WIGGERS: *Life of Socrates*. English Trans., 1840.

DE GERANDO: *Histoire Comparée des Systèmes de Philosophie*. Paris, 1822.

(This work enjoys considerable reputation, and deserves it. Clear, discriminating, and well written.)

VAN HEUSDE: *Initia Platonice*. Trajecti ad Rhenam, 1827.

(One of the most elegant and delightful works on the subject; written in very pleasant Latin, with great enthusiasm and abundant knowledge. A valuable introduction to the study of Plato.)

INTRODUCTION.

THIS work is intended as a contribution to the History of Humanity. Let us, therefore, at once define the nature and limits of this contribution, lest its object be mistaken. The History of Philosophy is a vague title, and should, properly speaking, include the rise and progress of all the sciences. As usually employed, the title is understood to refer only to one science, viz., the science called *metaphysics*. Though disapproving of this restrictive sense of the word philosophy, we use it in compliance with general usage. As all the earliest philosophy was essentially metaphysical, there is no great impropriety in designating Greek metaphysics by the name of Philosophy; but when Philosophy enlarged its bounds, and included all the physical sciences as its lawful subjects, then indeed the earlier and restricted use of the word occasioned great confusion. To remedy this confusion slight but ineffectual attempts have been made. The term *metaphysics*, and sometimes the expressive but uncouth term *ontology*,* have been brought forward to distinguish *à priori* speculations not within the scope of physical science. In order to prevent confusion, and at the same time to avoid the introduction of words so distasteful as metaphysics and

* The science of Being.

ontology, we shall throughout speak of Philosophy in its earlier and more restricted sense ; and shall designate by the term *Positive Science* that field of speculation commonly known as Inductive, or Baconian, Philosophy. It is the object of the present work to show how and by what steps Philosophy became Positive Science ; in other words, by what Methods the Human Mind was enabled to conquer for itself, in the long struggle of centuries, its present modicum of certain knowledge. All those who have any conviction in the steady development of humanity, and believe in a direct filiation of ideas, will at once admit, that the curious but erroneous speculations of the Greeks were necessary to the production of modern science. It is our belief, that there is a direct parentage between the various epochs ; a direct parentage between the ideas of the ancient thinkers and the ideas of moderns. In Philosophy the evidences of this filiation are so numerous and incontestible, that we cannot greatly err in signalizing them.

Having to trace the history of the mind in one region of its activity, it is incumbent on us to mark out the countries and epochs which we deem it requisite to notice. Are we to follow Brucker, and include the Antediluvian period ? Are we to trace the speculations of the Scythians, Persians, and Egyptians ? Are we to lose ourselves in that vast wilderness the East ? It is obvious that we must draw the line somewhere : we cannot write the history of every nation's thoughts. We confine ourselves, therefore, to Greece and modern Europe. We omit Rome. The Romans, confessedly, had no philosophy of their own ; and did but feebly imitate that of the Greeks. Their influence on

modern Europe has therefore been only indirect ; their labors count as nothing in the history of Philosophy. We also omit the East. It is very questionable whether the East had any Philosophy distinct from its Religion ; and still more questionable whether Greece was materially influenced by it. True it is, that the Greeks themselves supposed their early teachers to have imbibed wisdom at the Eastern fount. True it is, that modern oriental scholars, on first becoming acquainted with some of the strange doctrines of the Eastern sages, have recognised in them strong resemblances to the doctrines of the Greeks. But neither of these reasons are valid. The former is attributable to a very natural prejudice, which will be explained hereafter. The latter is attributable to the coincidences frequent in all speculation, and inevitable in so vague and vast a subject as Philosophy. Coincidences prove nothing but the similarity of all spontaneous tendencies of thought. Something more is needed to prove direct filiation.

A coincidence is the historian's will-o'-the-wisp, leading him into deep and distant bogs. He has studied the history of Philosophy to little purpose who has not learned to estimate the value of such resemblances ; who has not so familiarized himself with the nature of speculation as to be aware of their necessary frequency. Pantheism, for example, under some of its shapes, seems to have been a doctrine entertained by most speculative nations ; yet it seems to have been mostly spontaneous. Again, the physical speculations of the Greeks often coincide in expression with many of the greatest scientific discoveries of modern times ; does this prove that the Greeks anticipated the moderns? M. Du-

tens has thought so ; and written an erudite, but singularly erroneous, book to prove it. The radical error of all such opinions arises from mistaking the nature of Positive Science. Democritus, indeed, asserted the Milky Way to be only a cluster of stars : but his assertion was a mere guess ; and, though it happens to be correct, had no proof of certainty. It was Galileo who *discovered* the fact. He did not *guess* it. The difference between guessing and knowing, is just the difference between assertion and science. In the same way it is argued that Empedocles, Democritus, Pythagoras, and Plato were perfectly acquainted with the doctrine of gravitation ; and, by dint of forced translations, something coincident in expression with the Newtonian theory is certainly elicited. But Newton's incomparable discovery was not a vague guess ; it was a positive demonstration. He did not simply assert the fact of gravitation, he discovered the *laws* of its action.* From that discovery of the laws gigantic results have been obtained in a few years. From the antique assertion no result whatever was obtained during the whole activity of centuries.

From the above examples, it appears that coincidences of doctrine in metaphysical matters are no proof of any direct relationship, but only proofs of the spontaneous tendencies of the mind when moving within a circumscribed limit. Coincidences of expression, on the other hand, between a metaphysical doctrine and a scientific doctrine, prove nothing whatever. It is impossible for a doctrine

* Karsten expresses the distinction very happily : "Empedocles poeticae adumbravit idem quod tot seculis postea mathematicis rationibus demonstratum est à Newtono."—*Xenophanes, Carm. Reliquia*, p. xii.

which proceeds from a metaphysical point of view, although apparently only occupied with physical phenomena, to coincide with any truly scientific doctrine, except in language. Nothing can be more opposite than the Pythagorean and Newtonian physics; no bridge can overarch the chasm which separates them. Philosophy and Positive Science are irreconcilable. This is a point which it is of the utmost importance to understand clearly. Let us briefly indicate the characteristics of each.

Philosophy (metaphysical philosophy, remember!) aspires to the knowledge of *Essences* and *Causes*. Positive Science aspires only to the knowledge of *Laws*. The one pretends to discover *what things are* in themselves, apart from their appearances to sense, and whence they came. The other only wishes to discover their *modus operandi*; observing the constant *co-existences* and *successions* of phenomena amongst themselves, and generalizing them into some one *Law*.* In other words, the one endeavours to compass the Impossible; the other knows the limits of human faculties and contents itself with the Possible. To take an illustration from a popular subject, how many ingenious efforts have been made to discover the *cause* of Life!—how many theories respecting the Vital Principle! All such have been frivolous, because futile. The man of science knows that Causes are

* The reader who desires perfect conviction, and who desires, moreover, a clear idea of the nature and conditions of science, is earnestly recommended to make himself master of John Stuart Mill's incomparable 'System of Logic, Ratiocinative and Inductive,' a work we feel bound, on all occasions, to recommend to philosophical students, as doing more for the education of the scientific intellect than any work we are acquainted with.

not to be discovered—knows that Life is a thing which escapes investigation, because it defies experiment; when you would examine it, it is gone. Is Life, then, an enigma? What it is may be safely pronounced an enigma; but in what ways, and under what conditions it manifests itself, may be discovered by proper investigations.

Irreversible canon : whatever relates to the origin of things, i. e. *causes* ; and whatever relates to the existence of things, *per se*, i. e. *essences*, are the proper objects of Philosophy, and are wholly and utterly eliminated from the aims and methods of Positive Science.

With so broad and palpable a distinction between the two, we may be prepared to find radical differences in the Methods by which they are guided.

Philosophy and Positive Science are both Deductive. They have this in common, that they are both occupied with deducing conclusions from established axioms. But here the resemblance ends.

Philosophy is deductive *à priori* ; that is to say, starting from some *à priori* axiom, such as "All bodies tend to rest," or "Nature abhors a vacuum," the philosopher believes that all the logical conclusions deduced from the axiom, when applied to particular facts, are absolutely true of those facts ; and, if the axiom be indisputable, the conclusions, if legitimately drawn, will be true. Mathematics is the ideal of a deductive science ; it is wholly *à priori*, and wholly true.

Positive Science is deductive *à posteriori*. It begins by first ascertaining whether the axiom from which it is to deduce conclusions *be* indisputable. It experimentalizes ; it puts nature to the test of "interrogation." After much observation, it at-

tains, by the inductive process, to the certainty of a Law: such as "Attraction is ^{inversely} the square of the ^{as the} distance." A law equals an axiom. From this certain deductions are drawn. Positive Science commences; and that science is pronounced perfect when it has reached the point at which it may be carried on further by deduction alone. Such a science is Astronomy.

This then is the difference between the Methods of Philosophy and Positive Science: the one proceeds from *à priori* axioms—that is, from axioms taken up without having undergone the laborious but indispensable process of previous verification; the other proceeds from axioms which have been rigidly verified. The one proceeds from an Assumption, the other from a Fact.

It is a law of the human mind that speculations on all generalities begin deductively: and the only road to truth is to begin inductively. The origin of Positive Science is to be sought in Philosophy. The boldest and the grandest speculations came first. Man needed the stimulus of some higher reward than that of merely tracing the *co-existences* and *successions* of phenomena. Nothing but a solution of the mystery of the universe could content him; nothing less could tempt him to the labor of sustained speculation. Thus had Astronomy its first impulse given to it by astrologers. Nightly did the old Chaldeans watch the stars in the hope of wresting from them their secret influence over the destiny of man. Chemistry came from Alchemy; Physiology from Auguries. Many long and weary years, of long and weary struggles, were passed before men learned to suspect the vanity of their efforts. First came scepticism of

human knowledge altogether. Next came scepticism of the Methods men had followed. *Induction* arose. Slowly and laboriously, but as surely as slowly, did this method lead men into the right path. Axioms were obtained: axioms that had stood the test of proof, that were adequate expressions of general facts, not simply dogmatical expressions of opinions. Deduction again resumed its office; this time to good purpose: it was no longer guess-work.

The position occupied by Philosophy in the History of Humanity, is that of the great Initiative to Positive Science. It was the forlorn hope of humanity which perished in its efforts, but did not perish without having led the way to victory. The present work is an attempt to trace the steps by which this was accomplished; in this attempt consists its originality and its unity.

There are many who altogether deny the fact of progression; who regard Philosophy as something higher and greater than Positive Science; who believe that the reign of Philosophy is not yet finished. And they would point to Germany for confirmation. Thousands of Germans, to say nothing of individual Frenchmen and Englishmen, are now struggling with the same doubts as those which perplexed the Greeks of old. It is very true; "and pity 'tis 'tis true." We have no space, nor is this the occasion, to develop our views, nor to combat those of our adversaries. We content ourselves with proclaiming our belief in the constant Progression of Science, which will finally sweep away into the obscure corners of individual crotchets all the speculations which Philosophy boasts of usurping. We cannot mistake

the legible characters of History. If Germany is behind, humanity is marching far a-head, to great and certain conquests. Individuals may be retrograding : the race is steadily advancing. There is nothing to surprise, though much to deplore, in the number of eminent minds led into the swamps and infinite mists of metaphysics, even at the present day.

Long after Astronomy had been a science, accepted by all competent investigators, Astrology had still its individual votaries. Long after Chemistry had become a science, Alchemy still tempted many. Long after Physiology had become a science, there were and are still arduous seekers after the Vital Principle. But as these individual errors do not affect the general proposition respecting the wondrous and progressive march of Science, so also the individual metaphysicians, however eminent, form no real exception to the general proposition, that Philosophy has gradually been displaced by Positive Science, and will finally disappear.

Metaphysics has been defined *l'art de s'égarer avec méthode* : no definition of it can be wittier or truer.

The nature of Philosophy therefore condemns its followers to wander for ever in the same labyrinth, and in this circumscribed space many will necessarily fall into the track of their predecessors. In other words coincidences of doctrine at epochs widely distant from each other are inevitable.

Positive Science is further distinguished from Philosophy by the incontestible *progress* it every where makes. Its methods are stamped with certainty, because they are daily extending our certain

knowledge; because the immense experience of years and of myriads of intelligences confirms their truth, without casting a shadow of suspicion on them. Science then progresses, and must continue to progress. Philosophy only moves in the same endless circle. Its first principles are as much a matter of dispute as they were two thousand years ago. It has made no progress, although in constant movement. Precisely the same questions are being agitated in Germany at this moment as were being discussed in ancient Greece; and with no better means of solving them, with no better hopes of success. The united force of thousands of intellects, some of them among the greatest that have made the past illustrious, has been steadily concentrated on problems, supposed to be of vital importance, and believed to be perfectly susceptible of solution, without the least result. All this meditation and discussion has not even established a few first principles. Centuries of labour have not produced any perceptible progress.

The history of science on the other hand is the history of progress. So far from the same questions being discussed in the same way as they were in ancient Greece, they do not remain the same for two generations. In some sciences—Chemistry for example—ten years suffices to render a book so behind the state of knowledge as to be almost useless. Everywhere we see progress, more or less rapid, according to the greater or less facility of investigation.

In this constant circular movement of Philosophy and constant linear progress of Positive Science, we see the condemnation of the former. It is in vain to argue that because no progress has yet been

made, we are not therefore to conclude none will be made; it is in vain to argue that the difficulty of Philosophy is much greater than that of any science, and therefore greater time is needed for its perfection. The difficulty is Impossibility. No progress is made, because no certainty is possible. To aspire to the knowledge of more than phenomena, their resemblances and successions, is to aspire to transcend the limitations of human faculties. To *know* more we must *be* more.

This is our conviction. It is also the conviction of the majority of thinking men. Consciously or unconsciously, they condemn Philosophy. They discredit, or disregard it. The proof of this is in the general neglect into which Philosophy has fallen, and the greater assiduity bestowed on Positive Science. Loud complaints of this neglect are heard. Great contempt is expressed by the Philosophers. They may rail and they may sneer, but the world will go its way. The empire of Positive Science is established.*

We trust that no one will suppose we think slightingly of Philosophy. Assuredly we do not, or else why this work? Philosophy has usurped too many of our nights and days, has been the object and the solace of too great a portion of our bygone lives, to meet with disrespect from us. But we respect it as a great power that *has been*, and no longer *is*. It was the impulse to all early speculation; it was the parent of Positive Science. It nourished the infant mind of humanity; gave it

* Let those who doubt this seek satisfaction in Auguste Comte's 'Cours de Philosophie Positive.' Let every one who takes an interest in philosophy master this *opus magnum* of our age.

aliment, and directed its faculties; rescued the nobler part of man from the dominion of brutish ignorance; stirred him with insatiable thirst for knowledge, to slake which he was content to undergo amazing toil. But its office has been fulfilled; it is no longer necessary to humanity, and should be set aside. The only interest it can have is an historical interest.

The leading feature of this work is one which distinguishes it from all others on the subject: the peculiarity of being a History of Philosophy, by one who firmly believes that Philosophy is an impossible attempt, that it never has had any certitude, never can have any. All other historians have believed in Philosophy. They have sometimes been free from the trammels of any particular system—(Brucker and Ritter were so;) but they have not suspected the possible truth of Philosophy: they have merely been free from any defined system. Hitherto no one but a metaphysician has seen interest enough in it to write the History of Philosophy; besides, it could not be written without long acquaintance with the subject, and no sceptic of the possibility of the science could well have formed that acquaintance, unless, like the present writer, he was a sceptic after having been many years a believer.

We write therefore not in the interest of Philosophy, but as a contribution to the History of Humanity. Other historians may be divided into two classes: the erudite and the speculative. The one *collecting* the opinions of philosophers; the other *explaining* those opinions. Our great aim is to trace the development of philosophy; and we seek therefore to explain *methods*, rather than individual

opinions, though the latter are of course necessary to our plan.

Our plan is purely historical. Our scepticism will secure impartiality: since, believing no one system to be truer than another, though it may be more plausible, we can calmly appreciate the value of every one. Impartiality is a requisite, but it is not the only one. Impartiality implies unbiassed judgment; but it does not imply correct judgment. We shall doubtless err, and shall thankfully accept any indication of our errors. Most of the ancient writers have come down to us in fragments. We have not even the skeleton from which to judge of the living figure. Nothing but a thigh-bone here, a jaw-bone there, an arm elsewhere. But, as the comparative anatomist can often decide upon the nature and habits of an animal only from an inspection of its jaw-bone, being enabled, by his knowledge of the general animal structure, to fill up the outline; so should the historian be able to decide upon the nature and scope of any philosophical theory, from a study of only a fragment or two.

Now all historians who have attempted to explain the opinions of the ancient thinkers have been somewhat in this condition: they have either believed all animals to be of *one specific type*; or they have believed that all animals were of *one type*, without having decided the nature of that type. Hegel is an illustration of the former; Ritter of the latter class.

We also shall have to conjecture what was the nature of the system, from a fragment of its skeleton. But we are free from the bias of any metaphysical theory. Our decisions will be founded on

our knowledge of the human mind, and of the history of speculation; as the comparative anatomist's decisions are founded on his knowledge of the animal structure. Where so much is conjectural, much will necessarily be erroneous. How far we have erred, it is for readers to decide.

FIRST EPOCH.

SPECULATIONS ON THE NATURE OF THE
UNIVERSE.

BOOK I. THE PHYSIOLOGISTS.

BOOK II. THE MATHEMATICIANS.

BOOK III. THE ELEATICS

VOL. I.

C

BOOK I.
THE PHYSIOLOGISTS.*

CHAPTER I.

THALES.

ALTHOUGH the events of his life, no less than the precise doctrines of his philosophy, are shrouded in mystery, and belong rather to the domain of fable, nevertheless Thales is very justly considered as the father of Greek Speculation. He made an epoch. He laid the first foundation stone of Greek philosophy. The step he took was small, but it was decisive. Accordingly, although nothing but a few of his tenets remain, and those tenets fragmentary and incoherent, we know enough of the general tendency of his doctrines, to speak of him with some degree of certitude.

Thales was born at Miletus, a Greek colony in Asia Minor. The date of his birth is extremely doubtful; but the first year of the 35th Olympiad is generally accepted as correct. He belonged to one of the most illustrious families of Phœnicia; and took a conspicuous part in all the political

* We are forced, though unwillingly, to follow other historians in the use of the word physiology in its primitive sense. It has another and very different meaning in English, always signifying biology. But we have no other word wherewith to translate *φυσιολογοι*, or "inquirers into external nature."

affairs of his country : a part which earned for him the highest esteem of his fellow citizens. His immense activity in politics has been denied, by later writers, as inconsistent with the tradition, countenanced by Plato, of his having spent a life of solitude and meditation ; while, on the other hand, his affection for solitude has been questioned on the ground of his political activity. It seems to us that the two things are perfectly compatible. Meditation does not necessarily unfit a man for action ; nor does an active life absorb all his time, leaving him none for meditation. The wise man will strengthen himself by meditation, before he acts ; and he will act, to test the truth of his opinions. Thales was one of the Seven Sages. This reputation is sufficient to settle the dispute. It shows that he could not have been a mere Speculative Thinker ; for the Greek Sages were all moralists rather than metaphysicians. It shows also that he could not have been a mere man of action. His magnificent aphorism "know thyself" reveals the solitary meditative thinker.

Miletus was one of the most flourishing Greek colonies ; and, at the period we are now speaking of, before either a Persian or a Lydian yoke had crushed the energies of its population, it was a fine scene for the development of mental energies. Its commerce both by sea and land was immense. Its political constitution afforded the finest opportunities for individual development. Thales both by birth and education would naturally have been fixed there ; and would not, as it as often been said, have travelled into Egypt and Crete for the prosecution of his studies. These assertions, though frequently repeated, are based on no trusty authority. The only ground for the conjecture is the

fact of Thales being a proficient in mathematical knowledge; and from very early times, as we see in Herodotus, it was the fashion to derive the origin of almost every branch of knowledge from Egypt. So little consistency is there, however, in this narrative of his voyages, that he is said to have astonished the Egyptians, by showing them how to measure the height of their pyramids by their shadows. A nation so easily astonished by one of the simplest of mathematical problems could have had little to teach. Perhaps the strongest proof that he never travelled into Egypt—or that, if he travelled there, that he never came into communication with the priests—is the absence of all trace, however slight, of any Egyptian doctrine in the philosophy of Thales which he might not have found at home. To that philosophy we now address ourselves.

The distinctive characteristic of the Ionian School, in its first period, was that of physiological inquiry into the constitution of the universe. Thales opened this inquiry. It is commonly said, "Thales taught that the principle of all things was water." On a first glance, this will perhaps appear a mere extravagance. A smile of pity will greet it, accompanied by a reflection on the smiler's part, of the unlikelihood of his having ever believed in such an absurdity. But the serious student will be slow to accuse his predecessors of extravagance. The history of philosophy may be the history of errors; it is not that of follies. All the systems that have appeared have had a pregnant meaning. Only for this could they have been accepted. The meaning was proportionate to the opinions of the epoch, and as such is worth penetrating. Thales was one of the most extraordinary men that ever lived, and produced a most extra-

ordinary revolution. Such a man was not likely to have enunciated a philosophical thought which any child might have refuted. There was deep meaning in the thought; to him at least. Above all there was deep meaning in the attempt to discover this first of problems; although the attempt itself was abortive. Let us endeavour to penetrate the meaning of his thought; let us see if we cannot in some shape trace its rise and growth in his mind.

It is characteristic of most philosophical minds, to reduce all imaginable diversities to one principle. We shall see instances enough of this in the course of our narrative, to absolve us from the necessity of any demonstration here. We may, however, illustrate it by one brief example. As it was the inevitable tendency of religious speculation to reduce polytheism to monotheism—to generalize all the supernatural powers into one expression—so also was it the tendency of early philosophical speculation to reduce all possible modes of existence into one generalization of existence itself.

Thales speculating on the constitution of the universe could not but strive to discover the one principle—the primary Fact—the substance, of which all special existences were but the modes. Seeing around him constant transformations—birth and death—change of shape, of size, and of mode of existence, he could not regard any one of these variable states of existence as existence itself. He therefore asked himself, What is that *invariable existence* of which these are the *variable states*? In a word, What is the *beginning* of things?*

* Had historians said that Thales taught that moisture was the beginning of things, they would have greatly simplified the question; our word "principle" has another meaning. Beginning is the correct word; and is the one used by Aristotle, *ἄραυ ἀνά τὴν ἀρχήν*.—*Met.* i. 3.

To ask this question was to open the era of philosophical inquiry. Hitherto men had contented themselves with accepting the world as they found it; with believing what they saw; and with adoring what they could not see.

Thales felt that there was a vital question to be answered relative to the beginning of things. He looked around him. On what he saw, he meditated; the result of his meditation was the conviction that Moisture was the Beginning. Could anything be more naturally present to an Ionian mind than the universality of water? Had he not from boyhood upwards been familiar with the sea?

“There about the beach he wandered nourishing a youth
sublime

With the fairy tales of science, and the long result of time.”

When gazing abroad upon the blue expanse, hearing “the mighty waters rolling evermore,” and seeing the red sun, having spent its fiery energy, sink into the cool bosom of the wave, to rest there in peace, how often must he have been led to contemplate the all-embracing all-engulphing sea, upon whose throbbing breast the very earth itself reposed. This earth how finite; and that welling sea how infinite!

Once impressed with this idea, he examined the constitution of the earth. There also he found moisture everywhere. All things he found nourished by moisture; warmth itself he declared to proceed from moisture; the seeds of all things are moist. Water when condensed becomes earth.

Thus convinced of the universal presence of water, he declared it to be the beginning of things. Just what moisture is to the ground, it has well been said, necessary to its being what it is, yet not being the ground itself, just such a thing did Thales find in himself, something which was not

his body, but without which his body would not be what it is; without which it would be a dry husk falling to pieces.*

Thales would all the more readily adopt this notion from its harmonizing with ancient opinions; such for instance as Hesiod's Theogony, wherein Oceanus and Thetis were regarded as the parents of all such deities as had any relation to nature. "He would thus have performed for the popular religion that which modern science has performed for the book of Genesis: explaining what before was enigmatical."†

This remark leads us to the rectification of a serious error, which is very generally entertained: We allude to the supposed Atheism of Thales. It is sufficient to name the learned Ritter, and the brilliant, ingenious Victor Cousin, as upholders of this opinion, to show that its refutation is requisite. Because Thales held that water was the beginning of things, it is concluded that God, or the Gods, were not recognised by him. The only authority adduced in support of this conclusion is the negative authority of Aristotle's silence. But it seems to us that Aristotle's silence is directly against such a conclusion. Would he have been silent on so remarkable a point as that Thales believed only in the existence of water? We cannot think so. Cicero, when speaking of Thales, expressly says that he held water to be the beginning of things, but God was the mind which created them from water. We certainly object, with Hegel, to Cicero's attributing to Thales the conception of God as intelligence (*νοῦς*); that being the expression of

* 'Ency. Metrop.' art. *Moral and Metaph. Philos.*

† Benj. Constant, 'Du Polythéisme Romaine,' p. i. 167

more advanced philosophy. Thales clearly did not conceive any formative principle, either as Power or Intelligence, by which the primeval moisture was fashioned. He had no conception of a Creative Power. He believed in the Gods; but, in the ancient mythology, the *generation* of the Gods was a fundamental tenet; he believed, therefore, that the Gods, as all things, were generated from water. Aristotle's account bears only this interpretation.—*Met.* i. 3. But this is not Atheism. Atheism is not of so early a date. Indeed to believe in any Atheism at such a period of the world's history is radically to misconceive the history of the human race.

In conclusion, we may say that the step taken by Thales was twofold in its influence:—1st, to discover the beginning, the *prima materia* of all things, (*ἡ ἀρχή*); 2dly, to select from among the elements that element which was most omnipotent, omnipresent. To those acquainted with the history of the human mind, both these notions will be significant of an entirely new era. In our Introduction, we stated the law of the progress of science to be this: Starting with a pure *deductive method*, the human mind exhausted its ingenuity, in developing all possible theories, and, when satisfied with the vanity of its efforts, it followed another method, the *inductive*; till by means of the accumulated treasures of this method it was *again* enabled to reason deductively. The position occupied by Thales is that of the Father of Philosophy; since he was the first in Greece to furnish a formula from which to reason deductively.

CHAPTER II.

ANAXIMENES.

ANAXIMANDER is by most historians placed after **Thales**. We agree with **Ritter** in giving that place to **Anaximenes**. The reasons on which we ground this arrangement are, 1st, in so doing we follow our safest guide, **Aristotle**. 2dly, the doctrines of **Anaximenes** are the development of those of **Thales**; whereas **Anaximander** follows a totally different line of speculation. Indeed, the whole ordinary arrangement of the **Ionian School** seems to have proceeded on the conviction that each disciple not only contradicted his master, but also returned to the doctrines of his master's teacher. Thus **Anaximander** is made to succeed **Thales**, though quite opposed to him; whereas **Anaximenes**, who only carries out the principles of **Thales**, is made the disciple of **Anaximander**. When we state that 212 years, *i. e.* six or seven generations, are taken up by the lives of the four individuals said to stand in the successive relations of teacher and pupil, **Thales**, **Anaximander**, **Anaximenes**, and **Anaxagoras**, the reader will be able to estimate the value of the traditional relationship.

The truth is, only the names of the great leaders in philosophy were thought worth preserving; all those who merely applied or extended the doctrine were very properly consigned to oblivion. This is also the principle upon which the present history

is composed. No one will therefore demur to our placing Anaximenes second to Thales ; not as his disciple, but as his historical successor ; as the man who, taking up the speculation where Thales and his disciples left it, transmitted it to his successors in a more developed form.

Of the life of Anaximenes nothing further is known than that he was born at Miletus, probably in the 63rd Olympiad ; and discovered the obliquity of the ecliptic by means of the gnomon.

Pursuing the method of Thales, he could not satisfy himself with the truth of Thales' doctrine. Water was not to him the most significant element. He felt within him a something which moved him he knew not how, he knew not why ; something higher than himself ; invisible, but ever present. This he called his soul. His soul he believed to be air. Was there not also without him, no less than within him, an ever-moving, ever-present, invisible air ? The air which was within him, and which he called Soul, was it not a part of the air which was without him ? And, if so, was not this air the Beginning of Things ?

He looked around him, and thought his conjecture was confirmed. The air seemed universal.* The earth was as a broad leaf resting upon it. All things are produced from it : all things are resolved into it. When he breathed, he drew in a part of the universal life. All things were nourished by air, as he was nourished by it.

* When Anaximenes speaks of Air, as when Thales speaks of Water, we must not understand these elements as they appear in *this* or *that* determinate form on earth, but as Water and Air pregnant with vital energy and capable of infinite transmutations.

This was the central idea of his system. He applied it to the explanation of many phenomena in a way that would make the reader smile ; but, as this history is a record of Methods, and not a mere record of absurdities, we will not occupy our space by further detail. Compared with the doctrine of Thales this of Anaximenes presents a decided progress. As a *physiological* principle, air may be as absurd as water ; but the progress is seen in the conception of a principle founded on the analogies of the *soul*, rather than, as with Thales, on the analogies of the *seed*.

CHAPTER III.

DIOGENES OF APOLLONIA.

DIOGENES of Apollonia is the real successor of Anaximenes, although, from the uncritical arrangement usually adopted, he is made to represent no epoch whatever. Thus, Tennemann places him after Pythagoras. Hegel, by a strange oversight, says that we know nothing of Diogenes but the name.

Diogenes was born at Apollonia, in Crete. More than this we are unable to state with certainty; but, as he is said to have been a contemporary of Anaxagoras, we may assume him to have flourished about the 80th Olympiad. His work on Nature was extant in the time of Simplicius (the 6th century of our era), who extracted some passages from it.

Diogenes adopted the tenet of Anaximenes respecting Air as the origin of things; but he gave a wider and deeper signification to the tenet, by attaching himself more to the analogy of the Soul. Struck with the force of this analogy, he was led to push the conclusion to its ultimate limits. What is it, he may have asked himself, that constitutes Air the origin of things? Clearly its vital force. The Air is a Soul: therefore it is living and *intelligent*. But this Force or Intelligence is a higher thing than the Air, through which it manifests itself; it must consequently be prior in point of time; it must be the ἀρχή philosophers have sought.

The Universe is a living being, spontaneously evolving itself, deriving its transformation from its own vitality.

There are two remarkable points in this conception, both indicative of very great progress in speculation. The first is the attribute of Intelligence, with which the ἀρχὴ is endowed. Anaximenes considered the primary substance to be an animated substance; Air was Soul in his system; but the Soul did not necessarily imply Intelligence. He conceived the Soul as the vital principle. Diogenes saw that the soul was not only Force, but Intelligence; the Air which stirred within him, not only *prompted* but *instructed*. He carried this analogy of his soul on to the operations of the world. The Air, as the origin of all things, is necessarily an eternal, imperishable substance; but, as soul, it is also necessarily endowed with consciousness: "it knows much," and this knowledge is another proof of its being the primary substance; "for without Reason," he says, "it would be impossible for all to be arranged duly and proportionately; and whatever object we consider will be found to be arranged and ordered in the best and most beautiful manner." Order can result only from Intelligence; the Soul is therefore the First (ἀρχὴ). This conception was undoubtedly a great one; but that the reader may not exaggerate its importance, nor suppose that the rest of Diogenes' doctrines were equally reasonable and profound, we must for the sake of preserving historical truth advert to one or two of his applications of the conception. Thus:—

The world, as a living unity, must, like other individuals, derive its vital force from the Whole:

hence he attributed to the world a set of respiratory organs, which he fancied he discovered in the stars. All creation, and all material action were but respiration and exhalation. In the attraction of moisture to the sun, in the attraction of iron to the magnet, he equally saw a process of respiration. Man is superior to brutes in intelligence, because he inhales a purer air than brutes who bow their heads to the ground.

These *naïve* attempts at the explanation of phenomena will suffice to show that, although Diogenes had made a large stride, he had accomplished very little of the journey.

The second remarkable point indicated by his system is the manner in which it closes the inquiry opened by Thales. Thales, starting from the conviction that one of the four elements was the origin of the world, and water that element, was followed by Anaximenes, who thought that not only was Air a more universal element than Water, but that, being the soul, it must be the universal Life: to him succeeded Diogenes, who saw that not only was Air Life, but Intelligence, and that Intelligence must have been the First of Things.

We concur, therefore, with Ritter in regarding Diogenes as the last philosopher attached to the *Physiological* method; and that in his system that method receives its consummation. Having thus traced one great line of speculation, we must now cast our eyes upon what was being contemporaneously evolved in another direction.

BOOK II.

THE MATHEMATICIANS.

CHAPTER I.

ANAKIMANDER OF MILETUS.

“As we now, for the first time in the history of Greek Philosophy, meet with contemporaneous developments, the observation will not, perhaps, be deemed superfluous, that in the earliest times of philosophy, historical evidences of the reciprocal influence of the two lines either entirely fail or are very unworthy of credit; on the other hand, the internal evidence is of very limited value, because it is impossible to prove a complete ignorance in one of the ideas revolved and carried out in the other; nevertheless any argument drawn from an apparent acquaintance therewith, is far from being extensive or tenable, since all the olden philosophers drew from one common source—the national habit of thought. When indeed these two directions had been more largely pursued we shall find in the controversial notices sufficient evidence of an active conflict between these very opposite views of nature

and the universe. In truth, when we call to mind the inadequate means at the command of the earlier philosophers for the dissemination of their opinions, it appears extremely probable that their respective systems were for a long time known only within a very narrow circle. On the supposition, however, that the philosophical impulse of these times was the result of a real national want, it becomes at once probable that the various elements began to show themselves in Ionia nearly at the same time, independently and without any external connexion."*

The chief of the school we are now about to consider was Anaximander, of Miletus, whose birth is generally dated in 43rd Olympiad. He is sometimes called the friend, and sometimes the disciple, of Thales. We prefer the former relation; the latter is at any rate not the one in which this history can regard him. His reputation, both for political and scientific knowledge, was very great; and many important inventions are ascribed to him; amongst others that of the sun-dial and the sketch of a geographical map. His calculations of the size and distance of the heavenly bodies were committed to writing in a small work which is said to be the earliest of all philosophical writings. He was passionately addicted to mathematics, and framed a series of geometrical problems. He was the leader of a colony to Apollonia; and he is also reported to have resided at the court of the Tyrant Polycrates, in Samos, where also lived Pythagoras and Anacreon.

No two historians are agreed in their interpretation of Anaximander's doctrines; few, indeed, are agreed in the historical position he is to occupy.

* 'Ritter,' i. p. 265.

In offering a new view of the character of his philosophy, we call the reader's attention to this point, as a warrant for the attempt, and as an excuse for failure, if we fail.

Anaximander is stated to have been the first to use the term ἀρχή for the beginning of things. What he meant by this term *principle* is variously interpreted by the ancient writers; for, although they are unanimous in agreeing that he called it the *infinite* (τὸ ἄπειρον), what he understood by the infinite is yet undecided.*

On a first view nothing can well be less intelligible than this tenet: "The Infinite is the origin of all things." It either looks like the monotheism of a far later date,† or like the word-jugglery of mysticism. To our minds it is neither more nor less difficult of comprehension than the tenet of Thales, that "Water is the origin of all things." Let us cast ourselves back in imagination into those early days, and see if we cannot account for the rise of such an opinion.

On viewing Anaximander, side by side with his great predecessor and friend Thales, we cannot but be struck with the exclusively abstract tendency of his speculations. Instead of the meditative Metaphysician, we see the Geometrician. Thales, whose famous maxim, "know thyself," was essentially concrete, may serve as a contrast to Anaximander,

* 'Ritter,' i. 267.

† Which it certainly could not have been. To prevent any misconception of the kind, we may merely observe that the Infinite here meant, was not even the Limitless Power, much less the Limitless Mind, implied in the modern conception. In Anaxagoras, who lived a century later, we find τὸ ἄπειρον to be no more than vastness.—See *Simplicius, Phys.* 33, b. quoted in 'Ritter.'

whose axiom, "The Infinite is the origin of all things," is the ultimate effort of abstraction. Let us concede to him this tendency; let us see in him the geometrician rather than the moralist or physiologist; let us endeavour to understand how all things presented themselves to his mind in the abstract form, and how mathematics was the science of sciences, and we shall then be able to understand his tenets.

Thales, in searching for the origin of things, was led, as we have seen, to maintain Water to be that origin. But Anaximander, accustomed to view things in the abstract, could not accept so concrete a thing as Water; something more ultimate in the analysis was required. Water itself, which, in common with Thales, he held to be the material of the universe, was it not subject to *conditions*? what were those conditions? This Moisture, of which all things are made, does it not cease to be moisture in many instances? And can that which is the origin of all, ever change, ever be confounded with individual things? Water itself is a Thing; but a Thing cannot be All Things.

These objections to the doctrine of Thales caused him to reject, or rather to modify that doctrine. The ἀρχή, he said, was not Water; it must be the Unlimited All, τὸ ἄπειρον.

Vague and profitless enough this theory will doubtless appear. The abstraction "All" will seem a mere distinction in words. But, in Greek Philosophy, as we shall repeatedly notice, distinctions in words were generally equivalent to distinctions in things. And, if the reader reflects how the Mathematician, by the very nature of his science, is led to regard abstractions as entities, and to separate for

instance *form*, and to treat of it as if it alone constituted *body*, there will be no difficulty in conceiving Anaximander's distinction between all Finite Things and the Infinite All.

It is thus only we can explain his tenet ; and it thus seems borne out by the testimony of Aristotle and Theophrastus, who agree, that, by the Infinite he understood the multitude of elementary parts out of which individual things issued by separation. "By separation:" the phrase is significant. It means the passage from the abstract to the concrete—the All realizing itself in the Individual Thing. Call the Infinite by the name of Existence, and say, "there is Existence *per se* and Existence *per aliud*—the former is, *Existence* the ever-living fountain whence flow the various *existing Things*." In this way you may, perhaps, make Anaximander's meaning intelligible.

Let us now hear Ritter.—Anaximander is "represented as arguing, that the primary substance must have been infinite to be all-sufficient for the limitless variety of produced things with which we are encompassed. Now, though Aristotle expressly characterizes this infinite as a mixture, we must not think of it as a mere multiplicity of primary material elements ; for to the mind of Anaximander it was a Unity immortal and imperishable—an ever-producing energy. This production of individual things he derived from an eternal *motion of the Infinite*."

The primary Being, according to Anaximander, is unquestionably an Unity. It is One yet All. It comprises within itself the multiplicity of elements from which all mundane things are composed ; and these elements only need to be separated

from it to appear as separate phenomena of nature. Creation is the *decomposition of the Infinite*. How does this decomposition originate? By the eternal motion which is the condition of the Infinite. "He regarded," says Ritter, "the Infinite as being in a constant state of incipency, which, however, is nothing but a constant secretion and concretion of certain immutable elements; so that we might well say, the parts of the whole are constantly changing, while the whole is unchangeable."

The reader may smile at this logic; we would not have him do so. True, the idea of elevating an abstraction into a Being,—the origin of all things,—is baseless enough; it is as if we were to say, "There are numbers 1, 2, 3, 20, 80, 100; but there is also *Number* in the abstract, of which these individual numbers are but the concrete realization; without *Number* there would be no numbers." This is precisely similar reasoning: yet so difficult is it for the human mind to divest itself of its own abstractions, and to consider them as no more than as abstractions, that this error lies at the root of the majority of philosophical systems. It may help the reader to some tolerance of Anaximander's error if we inform him, that two of the most celebrated philosophers of modern times, Hegel and Victor Cousin, have maintained precisely the same tenet, though somewhat differently worded: they say, that Creation is God passing into activity, but not exhausted by the act; in other words, *Creation is the mundane existence of God*; finite Things are but the eternal motion, the *manifestation* of the All.

Anaximander separated himself from Thales by regarding the abstract as of higher significance than

the concrete ; and in this tendency we see the origin of the Pythagorean school, so often called the mathematical school. The speculations of Thales tended towards discovering the material constitution of the universe ; they were founded, in some degree, upon an induction from observed facts, however imperfect that induction might be. The speculations of Anaximander were *wholly deductive* ; and, as such, tended towards mathematics, the science of pure deduction.

As an example of this mathematical tendency we may notice his physiological speculations. The central point in his cosmopœia was the earth : for, being of a cylindrical form, with a base in the ratio 1 : 3 to its altitude, it was retained in its centre by the aid and by the equality of its distances from all the limits of the world.

From the foregoing exposition, the reader may judge of the propriety of that ordinary historical arrangement which places Anaximander as the successor of Thales. It is clear, that he originated one of the great lines of speculative inquiry, and that one, perhaps, the most curious in all antiquity. We will make one more remark. By Thales, Water, the origin of things, was held to be a real physical element, which, in the hands of his successors, became gradually transformed into a merely *representative* emblem of something wholly different (Life or Mind) ; and the element which lent its name as the representative was looked upon as a secondary phenomenon, derived from that primary force of which it was the emblem. Water was the real primary element with Thales ; with Diogenes, Water (having previously been displaced for Air) was but the emblem of Mind. A similar course is

observable in the Italian school. Anaximander's conception of the All, though abstract, is, nevertheless, to a great degree, physical: it is *All Things*. His conception of the Infinite was not ideal—it had not passed into the state of a symbol—it was the mere *description* of the primary fact of existence. Above all, it involved no conception of intelligence except as a mundane finite thing. His τὸ ἀπειρον was the Infinite Existence, but not the Infinite Mind. This later development we shall meet with hereafter in the Eleatics.

CHAPTER II.

PYTHAGORAS.

It will create some surprise, in those not already familiar with our plan, to see Pythagoras treated of in immediate connexion with Anaximander ; but, although for the strongest evidence we must refer to the next chapter, in which the Pythagorean doctrines will be considered, yet we may at once adduce some slight collateral proof. Anaximander resided at the court of Polycrates, at Samos, where Pythagoras also lived. So runs tradition. Now, although this tradition may be groundless, as a fact, yet it indicates a connexion between the two thinkers firmly credited by ancient writers, and fully confirmed by the spirit of the two systems.

The life of Pythagoras is enshrouded in the dim magnificence of legends, from which the attempt to extricate it is hopeless. Many years ago we examined this subject in its minutest details, and consulted almost everything that had been written on it. Guided by no sound principles of historical scepticism, we were perfectly bewildered with the force of contradictory evidence. We are now inclined to think that these opposing testimonies are of equal value : that is, of no value whatever.

Certain general indications are doubtless to be trusted ; but they are few and vague. We will endeavour to sketch a memoir from them.

As a specimen of the trouble necessary to settle any one point in this biography, we will here cite the various dates given by Scholars, as the results of their inquiries into his birth. Bentley says 43rd Olympiad ; Stanley, 53rd Oly. ; Gale, 60th Oly. ; Dacier, 47th Oly. ; Diodorus Siculus, 61st Oly. ; Lloyd, 43rd Oly. ; Dodwell, 52nd Oly. ; Clemens Alex., 62nd Oly. ; Eusebius, 63rd or 64th Oly. ; Thirwall, 51st Oly. ; Ritter, 49th Oly. : so that the accounts vary within the limits of eighty-four years. If we must make a choice, we should decide with Bentley ; not only from respect for that magnificent scholar, but because it agrees with the probable date of the birth of Pythagoras' friend and cotemporary, Anaximander.

Pythagoras is usually classed amongst the great founders of Mathematics ; and this receives confirmation from what we know of the general scope of his labours, and from the statement that he was chiefly occupied with the determination of extension and gravity, and measuring the ratios of musical tones. His science and skill are of course absurdly exaggerated ; as, indeed, is every portion of his life. Fable assigns him the place of a saint ; a worker of miracles, and the teacher of more than human wisdom. His very birth was marvellous ; some accounts making him the son of Hermes, others of Apollo : in proof of the latter, he is said to have exhibited a golden thigh. With a word he tamed the Daunian bear, which was laying waste the country ; with a whisper he restrained an ox from devouring beans. He was heard to lecture at different places, such as Metapontum and Tauromenium, on the same day and at the same hour. As he crossed the river, the river-god saluted him with

“Hail, Pythagoras!”; and to him the harmony of the Spheres was audible music.

Fable enshrines these wonders. But that they could exist, even as legendary lore, is significant of the greatness of Pythagoras. It is well said by Sir Lytton Bulwer, in his brilliant and thoughtful work on Athens, that not only all the traditions respecting Pythagoras, but the certain fact of the mighty effect that, in his single person, he afterwards wrought in Italy, prove him also to have possessed that nameless art of making a personal impression upon mankind, and creating individual enthusiasm, which is necessary to those who obtain a moral command, and are the founders of sects and institutions. It is so much in conformity with the manners of the time and the objects of Pythagoras, to believe that he diligently explored the ancient religious and political systems of Greece, from which he had been long a stranger, that we cannot reject the traditions (however disfigured with fable) that he visited Delos, and affected to receive instructions from the pious ministrants of Delphi.* It is no ordinary man that Fable exalts into its poetical region. Whenever you find romantic or miraculous deeds attributed to any man, be certain that that man was great enough to sustain the weight of this crown of fabulous glory. So with Pythagoras, we accept the evidence of Fable.

But the fact thus indicated is to us a refutation of the ordinary tradition of his having borrowed all his learning and philosophy from the East. Could not so great a man dispense with foreign teachers? Assuredly he could and did. But his countrymen, by a very natural process of thought, looked upon

* ‘Athens: its Rise and Fall,’ vol. ii. p. 412.

his greatness as the result of his Eastern education. It is an old proverb, that no man is a prophet in his own country ; and the imaginative Greeks were peculiarly prone to invest the distant and the foreign with striking attributes. They could not believe in wisdom springing up from amongst them ; they turned to the East as to a vast and unknown region, whence all novelty, even of thought, must spring.

When we consider, as Ritter observes, how Egypt was peculiarly the wonder-land of the olden Greeks, and how, even in later times, when it was so much better known, it was still, as it is to this day, so calculated to excite awe by the singular character of its people, which, reserved in itself, was always protruding on the observer's attention, through the stupendous structures of national Architecture, we can easily imagine how the Greeks were led to establish some connexion between this mighty East and their great Pythagoras.

But, although we can by no means believe that Pythagoras was much indebted to Egypt for his doctrines, we are not sceptical as to the account of his having travelled there. Samos was in constant intercourse with Egypt. If Pythagoras had travelled into Egypt—or, indeed, listened to the relations of those who had done so—he would have thereby obtained as much knowledge of Egyptian customs as appears in his system ; and that without having had the least instruction from the Priesthood. The doctrine of metempsychosis was a public doctrine with the Egyptians ; though, as Ritter says, he might not have been indebted to them even for that. Funeral customs and abstinence from particular kinds of food were things to be noticed by

any traveller. But the fundamental objection to Pythagoras having been instructed by the Egyptian Priests, is to be sought in the constitution of the caste of Priesthood itself. If they were so jealous of instruction as not to bestow it even on the most favoured of their countrymen, unless belonging to their caste, how unreasonable to suppose they would bestow it on a stranger, and one of different religion!

The ancient writers were sensible of this objection. To get rid of it, they invented a story which we shall give as it is given by Brucker. Polycrates was in friendly relations with Amasis, King of Egypt, to whom he sent Pythagoras, with a recommendation to enable him to gain access to the Priests. The king's authority was not sufficient to prevail on the priests to admit a stranger to their mysteries. They referred Pythagoras therefore to Thebes, as of greater antiquity. The Theban Priests were awed by the royal mandate, but were loath to admit a stranger to their rites. To disgust the novice, they forced him to undergo several severe ceremonies, amongst which was circumcision. But he could not be discouraged. He obeyed all their injunctions with such patience, that they resolved to take him into their confidence. He spent two-and-twenty years in Egypt, and returned perfect master of all science.

This is not a bad story: it has, however, one objection; it is not substantiated. To Pythagoras the invention of the word Philosopher is ascribed. When he was in Peloponnesus, he was asked by Leontius, what was his art? "I have no art. I am a philosopher," was the reply. Leontius never having heard the name before, asked what it meant.

Pythagoras gravely answered: "This life may be compared to the Olympic games; for, as in this assembly some seek glory and the crowns; some by the purchase or by the sale of merchandise seek gain; and others, more noble than either, go there neither for gain nor for applause, but solely to enjoy this wonderful spectacle, and to see and know all that passes; we, in the same manner, quit our country, which is heaven, and come into the world, which is an assembly where many work for profit, many for gain, and where there are but few who, despising avarice and vanity, study nature. It is these last whom I call Philosophers; for, as there is nothing more noble than to be a spectator without any personal interest, so in this life the contemplation and knowledge of nature, are infinitely more honourable than any other application." It is necessary to observe, that the ordinary interpretation of Philosopher, as Pythagoras meant it, a "lover of wisdom," is only accurate where the utmost extension is given to the word "lover." Wisdom must be the "be-all and the end-all here" of the philosopher, and not simply a taste, or a pursuit. It must be his mistress, to whom his life is devoted. This was the meaning of Pythagoras. The word which had before designated a wise man, was σοφός. But he wished to distinguish himself from the *sophoi*, or philosophers of his day, by name, as he had done by system. What was the meaning of *Sophos*? Unquestionably what we mean by a wise man, as distinct from a philosopher: one whose wisdom is *practical*, and turned to practical purposes; one who loves wisdom not for its own sake, so much as for the sake of its uses. Now Pythagoras loved wisdom for its own sake. Con-

temptation was to him the highest exercise of humanity. To bring wisdom down to the base purposes of life, was desecration. He called himself therefore a Philosopher—a Lover of Wisdom—to demarcate himself from those who sought Wisdom only as a power to be used for ulterior ends.

Does this interpretation of the word Philosopher explain any of his opinions? We believe so. Above all it explains the constitution of his Secret Society, into which no one was admitted, except after a severe initiation. For five years was the novice condemned to silence. Many relinquished the task in despair; they were unworthy of the contemplation of pure wisdom. Others, in whom the tendency to loquacity was observed to be less, had the period commuted. Various humiliations had to be endured. Various experiments were made of their powers of self-denial. By these Pythagoras judged whether they were worldly-minded, or whether they were fit to be admitted into the sanctuary of science. Having purged their souls of the baser particles by purifications, sacrifices, and initiations, they were admitted to the sanctuary, where the higher part of the soul was purged by the knowledge of truth, which consists in the knowledge of immaterial and eternal things. For this purpose he commenced with Mathematics, because, as they just preserve the medium between corporeal and incorporeal things, they can alone draw off the mind from Sensible things and conduct them to Intelligibles.

Shall we wonder, then, that he was venerated as a God. He who could so transcend all earthly struggles, and the great ambitions of the greatest men, as to live only for the sake of wisdom, was he not

of a higher stamp than ordinary mortals? Well might later historians picture him as clothed in robes of white, his head crowned with gold, his aspect grave, majestic, and calm; above the manifestation of any human joy, of any human sorrow; enrapt in contemplation of the deeper mysteries of existence; listening to music, and the hymns of Homer, Hesiod, and Thales; or listening to the harmony of the spheres.

He was the first of Mystics. And, to a lively, talkative, quibbling, active, versatile people like the Greeks, what a grand phenomenon must this solemn, earnest, silent, meditative man have appeared.

From Sir Lytton Bulwer's 'Athens' we borrow the following account of the political career of Pythagoras:—"Pythagoras arrived in Italy during the reign of Tarquinius Superbus, according to the testimony of Cicero and Aulus Gellius, and fixed his residence in Croton, a city in the bay of Tarentum, colonized by Greeks of the Achæan tribe. If we may lend a partial credit to the extravagant fables of later disciples, endeavouring to extract from florid superaddition some original germ of simple truth, it would seem, that he first appeared in the character of a teacher of youth, and, as was not unusual in those times, soon rose from the preceptor to the legislator. Dissensions in the city favoured his objects. The senate (consisting of a thousand members, doubtless of a different race from the body of the people; the first the posterity of the settlers, the last the native population) availed itself of the arrival and influence of an eloquent and renowned philosopher. He lent himself to the consolidation of aristocracies, and was equally in-

inical to democracy and tyranny. But his policy was that of no vulgar ambition: he refused, at least for a time, ostensible power and office, and was contented with instituting an organised and formidable society, not wholly dissimilar to that mighty order founded by Loyola in times comparatively recent. The disciples admitted into this society underwent examination and probation; it was through degrees that they passed into its higher honours, and were admitted into its deeper secrets. Religion made the basis of the fraternity, but religion connected with human ends of advancement and power. He selected the three hundred, who, at Croton, formed his order, from the noblest families, and they were professedly reared to know themselves, that so they might be fitted to command the world. It was not long before this society, of which Pythagoras was the head, appears to have supplanted the ancient senate, and obtained the legislative administration. In this institution, Pythagoras stands alone; no other founder of Greek philosophy resembles him. By all accounts, he also differed from the other sages of his time, in his estimate of the importance of women. He is said to have lectured to, and taught them. His wife was herself a philosopher, and fifteen disciples of the softer sex rank among the prominent ornaments of his school. An order based upon so profound a knowledge of all that can fascinate or cheat mankind, could not fail to secure a temporary power. His influence was unbounded in Croton—it extended to other Italian cities—it amended, or overturned political constitutions; and, had Pythagoras possessed a more coarse and personal ambition, he might, perhaps, have founded a mighty dynasty,

and enriched our social annals with the result of a new experiment. But his was the ambition, not of a hero, but a sage. He wished rather to establish a system than to exalt himself; his immediate followers saw not all the consequences that might be derived from the fraternity he founded: and the political designs of his gorgeous and august philosophy, only for a while successful, left behind them but the mummeries of an impotent freemasonry, and the enthusiastic ceremonies of half-witted ascetics.

“It was when this power, so mystic and so revolutionary, had, by the means of branch societies, established itself throughout a considerable portion of Italy, that a general feeling of alarm and suspicion broke out against the sage and his sectarians. The anti-Pythagorean risings, according to Porphyry, were sufficiently numerous and active to be remembered for long generations afterwards. Many of the sage’s friends are said to have perished, and it is doubtful whether Pythagoras himself fell a victim to the rage of his enemies, or died, a fugitive, amongst his disciples at Metapontum. Nor was it until nearly the whole of Lower Italy was torn by convulsions, and Greece herself drawn into the contest, as pacificator and arbiter, that the ferment was allayed:—the Pythagorean institutions were abolished, and the timocratic democracies of the Achæans rose upon the ruins of those intellectual but ungenial oligarchies.

“Pythagoras committed a fatal error when, in his attempt to revolutionise society, he had recourse to aristocracies for his agents. Revolutions, especially those influenced by religion, can never be worked out but by popular emotions. It was from this

error of judgment that he enlisted the people against him ; for, by the account of Neanthes, related by Porphyry, and indeed from all other testimony, it is clearly evident that to popular, not party, commotion, his fall must be ascribed. It is no less clear that, after his death, while his philosophical sect remained, his political code crumbled away. 'The only seeds sown by philosophers, which spring up into Great States, are those that, whether for good or evil, are planted in the hearts of the Many.'

We cannot omit the story which so long amused the world respecting his discovery of the musical chords. Hearing one day, in the shop of a blacksmith, a number of men striking successively a piece of heated iron, he remarked that all the hammers except one produced harmonious chords, viz., the octave, the fifth, and the third ; but the sound between the fifth and third was discordant. On entering the workshop, he found the diversity of sounds was owing to the difference in the *weight* of the hammers. He took the exact weights, and on reaching home suspended four strings of equal dimensions, and, hanging a weight at the end of each of the strings, equal to the weight of each hammer, he struck the strings, and found the sounds correspond with those of the hammers. He then proceeded to the formation of a musical scale.

On this, Dr. Burney, in his *History of Music*, remarks :—“ Though both hammers and anvil have been swallowed by ancients and moderns with most ostrich-like digestion ; yet, upon examination and experiment, it appears that hammers of different size and weight will no more produce different tones upon the same anvil, than bows or clappers of different size will from the same string or bell.”

We close here our account of the life of Pythagoras with reminding the reader that one great reason for the fabulous and contradictory assertions collected together in histories and biographies, arises from the uncritical manner in which the "authorities" have been used. To take only one "authority" as an example: Iamblicus wrote his life of Pythagoras, with a view of combating the rising doctrine of Christianity, and of opposing, by implication, a Pagan philosopher to Christ. Hence the miracles that were attributed to him.

If our account is somewhat slender, it is so because no certain materials for a better one are extant.

CHAPTER III.

PHILOSOPHY OF PYTHAGORAS.

THERE is no system in the whole course of our history more difficult to seize and represent accurately than that commonly known as the Pythagorean. It has made prodigious noise in the world; so much so as to be often confounded with its distant echos. An air of mystery, always inviting to a large class, surrounds it. The marvellous relations of its illustrious founder; the supposed assimilation it contains of various elements of Eastern speculation; and the supposed symbolical nature of its doctrines, have all equally combined to render it attractive and contradictory. Every dogma in it has been traced to some prior philosophy. Not a vestige will remain to be called the property of the teacher himself, if we restore to the Jews, Indians, Egyptians, Chaldeans, Phœnicians, nay even Thracians, those various portions which he is declared to have borrowed from them.

All this pretended plagiarism we incline to think extremely improbable; and, were this a critical history, we should endeavour to show on what false assumptions it is grounded.

We can here, however, merely record our conviction that Pythagoras was a consequence of Anaximander; and that his doctrines, in as far as we can gather from their leading tendency, were but a continuation of that abstract and deductive philosophy of which Anaximander was the chief.

At the outset we must premise, that whatever interest there may be in following out the particular opinions recorded as belonging to Pythagoras, such a process is quite incompatible with our plan. The greatest uncertainty still exists, and must for ever exist, amongst scholars, respecting the genuineness of those opinions. Even such as are recorded by trusty authorities, are always vaguely attributed by them to "the Pythagoreans," not to Pythagoras. Modern criticism has clearly shown that the works attributed to Timæus and Archytas are spurious; and that the supposed treatise of Ocellus Lucanus on the nature of The All cannot even have been written by a Pythagorean. Plato and Aristotle, the only ancient writers who are to be trusted in this matter, do not attribute any peculiar doctrines to Pythagoras. The reason is simple. Pythagoras taught only in secret; and never wrote. What he taught his disciples it is impossible accurately to learn from what those disciples themselves taught. His influence over their minds was unquestionably immense; and this influence would communicate to his school a distinctive *tendency*, but not one accordant doctrine; for each scholar would carry out that tendency in the direction which best suited his tastes and powers.*

* We assume this to be the case; but we do not assume it groundlessly. We are guided by the striking analogy afforded by the celebrated Saint Simon. Like Pythagoras, the Frenchman published no complete account of his system. He communicated it to his disciples; and, as his influence over their minds was almost unparelled, the *tendency* of his philosophy took deep root, though producing very different fruits in different minds. Those moderately acquainted with French writers will appreciate this when we simply enumerate MM. Augustin Thierry, Auguste Comte, Pierre Leroux, Michel Chevalier, Le Père Enfantin, M. Bazard,

The extreme difficulty of ascertaining accurately what Pythagoras thought, or even what his disciples thought, will not embarrass us, if we can but ascertain the general tendency of their speculations, and, above all, the peculiarity of their method. Because this difficulty, which, for the critical historian we believe insuperable, only affects us indirectly; it renders our endeavour to seize the characteristic method and tendency more hazardous and more liable to contradiction; but it does not compel us to interrupt our march for the sake of storming every individual fortress of opinion we may encounter on our way. We have to trace out the map of the philosophical world; we must be careful to ascertain the great outlines of each country: this we may be enabled to do without absolutely being acquainted with the *internal* varieties of that country; for geographers are not bound to be also geologists.

What were the method and tendency of the Pythagorean school? The method purely Deductive; the tendency wholly towards the consideration of abstractions, as the only true materials of science. Hence the name not unfrequently given to that school of "the Mathematical." The list of Pythagoreans embraces the greatest names in mathematics and astronomy: Archytas and Philolaus, and subsequently Hipparchus and Ptolemy.*

We may now, perhaps, in some sort, comprehend what Pythagoras meant when he taught that *Num- &c.*, all disciples of Saint Simon, yet with very different results!

* The classical reader will remember that Æschylus, a disciple of Pythagoras, makes his Titan boast of having discovered for men, Number, the highest of the sciences; *Καὶ μὴν ἀριθμὸν, ἔλεγον σοφισμάτων, ἐξῆρον αὐτοῖς.*—*Prom.*, 451.

bers were the *principles of Things*: τοὺς ἀριθμοὺς αἰτίους εἶναι τῆς οὐσίας, (*Arist. Met.* i. 6,) or, to translate more literally, "Numbers are the cause of the material existence of Things;" οὐσία being here evidently the expression of concrete existence. This is confirmed by the wording of the formula given elsewhere by Aristotle, that Nature is realized from Numbers: τὴν φύσιν ἐξ ἀριθμῶν συνιστάσθαι.—*De Cælo*, iii. 1. Or again: Things are but the copies of Numbers: μίμησιν εἶναι τὰ ὄντα τῶν ἀριθμῶν.—*Met.*, i. 6. What Pythagoras meant was, that Numbers were the *ultimate nature* of things. Anaximander saw, that things in themselves are not final; they are constantly changing both position and attributes; they are variable, and the principle of existence must be *invariable*; he called that invariable existence, THE ALL.

Pythagoras saw that there was an invariable existence lying beneath these varieties; but he wanted some more definite expression for it, and he called it Number. Thus each individual thing may change its position, its mode of existence, all its peculiar attributes may be destroyed except one; and that is its numerical attribute. It is always "One" thing; nothing can destroy that numerical existence. Combine the Thing in every possible variety of ways, and it still remains "One;" it cannot be made less than "one," it cannot be made more than "one." Resolve it into its minutest particles, and each particle is "one." Having thus found that numerical existence was the only invariable existence, he was easily led to proclaim all Things to be but copies of Numbers. "All phenomena must originate in the simplest elements," says Sextus Empiricus, "and it would be contrary

to reason to suppose the Principle of the Universe to participate in the nature of sensible phenomena. The *Principia* are consequently not only invisible and intangible, but also incorporeal."

As the numerical existence is the ultimate state at which analysis can arrive with respect to finite Things, so also is it the ultimate state at which we can arrive with respect to the Infinite, or Existence in itself. The Infinite, therefore, must be *One*. *One* is the absolute number; it exists in and by itself; it has no need of any relation with any thing else, not even with any other number; *Two* is but the relation of *One* to *One*. All modes of existence are but finite aspects of the Infinite; so all numbers are but numerical relations of the *One*. In the original *One*, all numbers are contained, and consequently the elements of the whole world.

Observe, moreover, that *One* is necessarily the ἀρχή—the beginning of things, so eagerly sought by philosophers, since, wherever you begin, you must begin with *One*. Suppose the number be three, and you strike off the initial number to make two, the second then will be *One*. In a word *One* is the Beginning of all things.

The verbal quibble on which this, as indeed the whole system, reposes, need not excite any suspicion of the sincerity of Pythagoras. The Greeks were unfortunately acquainted with no language but their own; and, as a natural consequence, mistook distinctions in language for distinctions in things. It has been well said by Mr. Whewell, that "all the first attempts to comprehend the operations of Nature, led to the introduction of abstract conceptions, vague indeed, but not therefore unmeaning. And the next step in philosophising, necessarily, was

to make those vague abstractions more clear and fixed, so that the logical faculty should be able to employ them securely and coherently. But there were two ways of making this attempt; the one by examining the words only, and the thoughts which they call up; the other by attending to the facts and things which bring these abstract terms into use. The Greeks followed the *verbal* or *notional* course, and failed." *

It is only by means of the above explanation that we can any way credit the belief in distinctions so wire-drawn as those of Pythagoras; it is only thus that we can understand how he could have held that Numbers were Beings. Aristotle attributes this philosophy to the fondness of Pythagoras for mathematics, which concerns itself with the abstract not with the material existence of sensible things; but surely this is only half the explanation? The mathematicians in our day not only reason entirely with symbols, which stand as the representative of things, without having the least affinity or resemblance to the things (being wholly arbitrary *marks*), but very many of these men never trouble themselves at all with inspecting the things about which they reason by means of symbols. Much of the science of Astronomy is carried on by those who never use a telescope; it is carried on by figures upon paper, and calculations of those figures. Because, however, they use numbers as symbols, they do not suppose that numbers are more than symbols. But Pythagoras was not able to make this distinction. He believed that numbers were things in reality, not merely in symbol. When therefore Ritter says that the Pythagorean formula

* 'History of the Inductive Sciences,' i. p. 34.

“can only be taken symbolically,” he appears to us to commit a great anachronism, and to antedate by several centuries a mode of thought at variance with all we know of Greek Philosophy; at variance also with the express testimony of Aristotle, who says: “The Pythagoreans did not separate Numbers from Things. They held Number to be the Principle and Material of things, no less than their essence and power.”—*Met.*, i. 5.* The notion that because we, in the present state of philosophy, cannot conceive Numbers otherwise than as symbols, that therefore Pythagoras must have conceived them in the same way, is one which has been very widely spread, but which we hold to be as great an anachronism as Shakspeare’s making Hector quote Aristotle, or Racine’s exhibiting the etiquette of Versailles, in the camp at Aulis. And Ritter himself, after having stated with considerable detail the various points in this philosophy, admits that the essential doctrine rests on “the derivation of all in the world from mathematical relations, and on the resolution of the relations of space and time into those of units or numbers. All proceeds from the original one, or primary number, or from the plurality of units or numbers into which the one in its life-development divides itself.” Now, to suppose that this doctrine was simply mathematical, and not mathematico-cosmological is to violate all

* Perhaps it would be more accurate to say, “Numbers are the beginning of things, the *cause of their material existence* (*ὄλην τοῖς οὐσι* he has before defined *ὄλη* as *causa materialis* cap. 3.) and of their modifications (*ὡς πρώτη τε καὶ ἕξις*).”

The whole chapter should be consulted by those who believe in the symbolical use of numbers; a belief Aristotle had certainly no suspicion of.—See ‘Appendix A.’ where a translation of the chapter is given.

principles of historical philosophy; for it is to throw the opinions of our day into the period of Pythagoras. For a final proof, consider the formula, *μίμησιν εἶναι τὰ ὄντα τῶν ἀριθμῶν*. "Things are the copies of Numbers." This formula, which of all others is the most favourable to the notion we are combating, will on a close inspection exhibit the real meaning of Pythagoras to be directly the reverse of symbolical. Symbols are arbitrary marks, bearing no resemblance to the things they represent; *a, b, c, x* are but letters of the alphabet; the mathematician makes them the symbols of quantities, or of things; but no one would call *x* the copy of an unknown quantity. This is so far clear. But what is the meaning of Things being copies of Numbers, if they are Numbers in essence? The meaning we must seek in anterior explanations. We shall there find that Things are the *concrete existences* of *abstract Existence*; and that when Numbers are said to be the *principia*, it is meant that the *forms* of material things, the original essences, which remain invariable, are Numbers.* Thus a stone is One stone; as such it is a copy of One; it is the realization of the abstract One into a concrete stone. Let the stone be ground to dust, and the particle of dust is still a copy, another copy of the One.

This may appear somewhat metaphysical and not a little sophistical; but it is thus that we represent to ourselves the doctrine of Pythagoras. The

* Hence we must caution against supposing, as is not unfrequent, that Pythagoras had at all anticipated the theory of "definite proportions." Numbers are not the laws of combination, nor the expression of those laws, but the essences which remain invariable under every variety of combination. See our *Introduction*.

reader will bear in mind the nature of our task. We have only a few mystical expressions, such as that "Number is the principle of Things," handed down to us as the doctrines of a Thinker, who created a considerable school, and whose influence on philosophy was undeniably immense. We have to interpret these expressions as we best can. Above all, we have to give them some appearance of plausibility; and this not so much an appearance of plausibility to modern thinkers as what would have been plausible to the ancients. Now, as far as we have familiarized ourselves with the antique modes of thought, our interpretation of Pythagoras is one which, if not the true, is at any rate very analogous to it; by such a logical process he *might* have arrived at his conclusions, and for our purpose this is almost the same as if he had arrived at them by it.

The great questions are these two: Did Pythagoras regard Numbers as symbols, or as Entities? and, if as Entities, How could such an opinion have originated?

The first question is decisively answered by Aristotle, to the effect that Numbers were Essences, were the real Beings, and not merely Symbols, as we have shown. Doubts are thrown on Aristotle's authority; he is said to have misunderstood, and misrepresented Pythagoras. It may be so; but we have no authority at all equal to him, and we must either accept or reject him entirely: and, if the latter, we must be silent on the whole subject. Now, we not only accept his testimony as the only valuable one, but we find it quite consonant with the opinions antecedent to Pythagoras; those namely of his friend Anaximander. We should

say *à priori* that some such opinions as those of Pythagoras must have followed those of Anaximander.

The first question then being answered by Aristotle, it remained for us to answer the second : we have endeavoured to do so.

The nature of this work forbids any detailed account of the various opinions attributed to him on subsidiary points. But we may instance his celebrated theory of the music of the spheres as a good specimen of the deductive method employed by him. Assuming that every thing in the great Arrangement (*κόσμος*), which he called the world, must be harmoniously arranged, and, assuming that the planets were at the same proportionate distances from one another as the divisions of the monochord, he concluded that in passing through the ether they must make a sound, and that this sound would vary according to the diversity of their magnitude, velocity, and relative distance. Saturn gave the deepest tone, as being the farthest from the earth ; the Moon gave the shrillest, as being nearest to the earth.

It may be necessary just to state that the attempt to make Pythagoras a Monotheist is utterly without solid basis, and unworthy of refutation.

The doctrine of Transmigration of Souls is of too great and general an interest for us to pass it over in silence. It has been also regarded as symbolical ; with very little reason, or rather with no reason at all. He defined the soul to be a monad (unity) which was self-moved.—*Arist., De Animâ*, i. 2. Of course the soul, inasmuch as it was a number, was One, *i. e.* perfect. But all perfection, in as far as it is moved, must pass into

imperfection, whence it strives to regain its state of perfection. Imperfection he called a departure from unity; *two* therefore was accursed.

The soul in man is in a state of comparative imperfection:* it has three elements, Reason (*νοῦς*), Intelligence (*φρήν*), and Desire (*θυμὸς*); the two last man has in common with brutes; the first is his distinguishing characteristic. It has hence been concluded that Pythagoras could not have maintained the doctrine of transmigration; his distinguishing man from brutes being a refutation of those who charge him with the doctrine.† Without disputing the ingenuity of this argument, we are wholly unconvinced by it.‡ The Soul, being a self-moved monad, is One, whether it connect itself with two or with three; in other words the *essence* remains the same whatever its *manifestations*. The One soul may have two aspects; Intelligence and Desire, as in brutes; or it may have three aspects, as in man. But each of these aspects may predominate, and the man will then become eminently rational, or able, or sensual; he will be a philosopher, a man of the world, or a beast. Hence the importance of the Pythagorean initiation, and of the studies of Mathematics and Music.

“This soul, which can look before and after, can shrink and shrivel itself into an incapacity of con-

* Thus Aristotle expresses himself when he says that the Pythagoreans maintained the soul and intelligence to be a certain combination of numbers, τὸ δὲ τριωνδὶ (sc. τῶν ἀριθμῶν) ψυχὴ καὶ νοῦς.—*Met.*, i. 5.

† Pierre Leroux, ‘De l’Humanité,’ vol. i. p. 390–426.

‡ Plato distinctly mentions the transmigration to beasts.—*Phædrus*, p. 45. And the Pythagorean Timæus, in his statement of the doctrine, as expressly includes beasts.—*Timæus*, p. 45.

templating aught but the present moment, of what depths of degeneracy it is capable! What a beast it may become! And, if something lower than itself, why not something higher! And, if something higher and lower, may there not be a law accurately determining its elevation and descent? Each soul has its peculiar evil tastes, bringing it to the likeness of different creatures beneath itself; why may it not be under the necessity of abiding in the condition of that thing to which it had adapted and reduced itself?"*

In closing this account of a very imperfectly known doctrine, we have only further to exhibit its relation to the preceding philosophy. It is clearly an offshoot of Anaximander's doctrine, which it develops in a more logical manner. In Anaximander there remained a trace of physical inquiry; in Pythagoras science is frankly mathematical. Assuming that Number is the real invariable essence of the world, it was a natural deduction that the world is regulated by numerical proportions; and from this all the rest of his system followed as a consequence. Anaximander's system is but a rude and daring sketch of a doctrine which the great mathematical genius of Pythagoras developed. The Infinite of Anaximander became the One of Pythagoras. Observe, that in neither of these systems is Mind an attribute of the Infinite. It has been frequently maintained that Pythagoras taught the doctrine of a "soul of the world." But there is no solid ground for the opinion; no more than for that of his Theism, which later writers so anxiously attributed to him. The conception of an Infinite Mind is much later than Pythagoras.

* 'Ency. Metrop.,'—art. *Moral and Metaphy. Philos.*

He only regarded Mind as a phenomenon ; as the peculiar manifestation of an essential number. And the proof of this assertion we take to lie in his very doctrine of the soul. If the *Monad*, which is self-moved, can pass into the state of a brute, or of a plant, in which state it successively loses its Reason, *νοῦς*, and its Intelligence, *φρόνη*, to become merely sensual and concupiscible, does not this abdication of Reason and Intelligence distinctly prove them to be only variable manifestations (phenomena) of the invariable Essence? Assuredly ; and those who argue for the Soul of the World as an Intelligence, in the Pythagorean doctrine, must renounce both the doctrine of transmigration, and the central doctrine of the system, the invariable Number as the Essence of things.

Pythagoras represents the second epoch of the second Branch of Ionian Philosophy ; he is parallel with *Anaximenes*.

BOOK III.
THE ELEATICS.

CHAPTER I.

XENOPHANES.

THE contradictory statements which, for so long, had obscured the question of the date of Xenophanes' birth, may now be said to have been satisfactorily cleared up. M. Victor Cousin's essay on the subject will leave few readers unconvinced.* We may assert, therefore, with some probability, that Xenophanes was born in the 40th Olympiad, and that he lived nearly a hundred years. His birth-place was Colophon, an Ionian city of Asia-Minor; a city long famous as the seat of elegiac and gnomic poetry, and ranking the poet Minnervus amongst its celebrated men. He cultivated this species of poetry from his youth upwards; it was the joy of his youthhood, the consolation and support of his manhood and old age. Banished from his native city, from what cause is unknown, he wandered over Sicily as

* 'Nouveaux Fragmens Philosophiques,' Bruxelles, 1841. —The critical reader will observe some mis-statements in this essay, but on the whole it is well worthy of perusal. Karsten's 'Xenophanis Carminum Reliquæ' is of very great value to the student.

a Rhapsodist :* a profession he exercised apparently till his death, though, if we are to credit Plutarch, with very little pecuniary benefit. He lived poor, and died poor. But he, above all men, could dispense with riches, having within him treasures inexhaustible. He whose whole soul was enwrapt in the contemplation of grand ideas, and whose vocation was the poetical expression of those ideas, could need but little of worldly grandeur. He seems to us to have been one of the most remarkable men of antiquity; certainly one of the sincerest. He had no pity for the idle and luxurious superstitions of his time; he had no tolerance for the sunny legends of Homer, defaced as they were by the errors of polytheism. He, a poet, was fierce in the combat he perpetually waged with the first of poets; not from petty envy; not from petty ignorance; but from the deep sincerity of his heart, from the holy enthusiasm of his reverence. He who believed in one God, supreme in power, goodness, and intelligence, could not witness without pain the degradation of the Divine in the common religion. It was not that he was dead to the poetic beauty of the Homeric fables, but that he was keenly alive to their religious falsehood. Plato, whom none will accuse of want of poetical taste, made the same objection. The latter portion of the 2nd and the beginning of the 3rd books of Plato's 'Republic,' are but expansions of these verses of Xenophanes:—

“Such things of the gods are related by Homer and Hesiod
As would be shame and abiding disgrace to any of mankind;
Promises broken, and thefts, and the one deceiving the other.”

* The Rhapsodists were the Minstrels of antiquity. They learned poems by heart and recited them to assembled crowds and on the occasions of feasts. Homer was a rhapsodist; and rhapsodised his own divine verses.

He who firmly believed that

“There’s but one God alone, the greatest of Gods and of mortals,

Neither in body to mankind resembling, neither in ideas.”*

could not but see, “more in sorrow than in anger,” the gross anthromorphism of his fellows :—

“But men foolishly think that Gods are born like as men are, And have too a dress like their own, and their voice and their figure :

But if oxen and lions had hands like ours, and fingers, Then would horses like unto horses, and oxen to oxen, Paint and fashion their god-forms, and give to them bodies Of like shape to their own, as they themselves too are fashioned.”†

In confirmation of which satire he referred to the Ethiopians, who represent their gods with flat noses, and of black color ; while the Thracians give them blue eyes and ruddy complexions.

Having attained a clear recognition of the unity and perfection of the Godhead, it became the object of his life to spread that conviction abroad, and to

* This is too important a position to admit of our passing over the original :—

*εἰς θεὸς ἕν τε θεῶν καὶ ἀνθρώπων μέγιστος
οὗτος διμας θνητῶν ὁμοίος οὗτος νόημα.*

Fragm. i. Ed. Karsten.

Wiggers, in his ‘Life of Socrates,’ expresses his surprise that Xenophanes was allowed to speak so freely respecting the State Religion in Magna Græcia, when philosophical opinions much less connected with religion had proved so fatal to Anaxagoras in Athens. But the apparent contradiction is reconciled when we remember that Xenophanes was a poet, and poets have in all ages been somewhat privileged persons.

† Fragments v. and vi. are here united, as in Ritter. The sense seems to demand this conjunction. But Clemens Alexandrinus quotes the second fragment as if it occurred in another part of the poem ; introducing it with καὶ πάλιν φησι—“and again he says.”—*Karsten, p. 41.*

tear down the thick veil of superstition which hid the august countenance of truth. He looked around him, and saw mankind divided into two classes; those who speculated on the nature of things, and endeavoured to raise themselves up to a recognition of the Divine, and those who yielded an easy unreflecting assent to the easy superstitions which compose religion. The first class speculated; but they kept their speculations to themselves, and to a small circle of disciples. If they sought truth, it was not to communicate it to all minds; they did not work for humanity, but for the few. Even Pythagoras, earnest thinker as he was, could not be made to believe in the fitness of the multitude for truth. He had two sorts of doctrine to teach: one for a few disciples, whom he chose with extreme caution; the other for such as pleased to listen. The former was what he believed the truth; the latter was what he thought the mass were fitted to receive. Not so Xenophanes. He recognised no such distinction. Truth was for all men; and to all men he endeavoured to present it; and for three-quarters of a century did he, the great Rhapsodist of Truth, emulate his countryman Homer, the great Rhapsodist of Beauty, and wander into many lands, uttering the thought that was working in him. What a contrast is presented by these two Ionian singers! contrast in purpose, in means, and in fate. The rhapsodies of the philosopher once so eagerly listened to, and affectionately preserved in traditionary fragments, are now only extant in briefest extracts contained in ancient books, so ancient and so uninteresting as to be visited only by some rare old scholar and a few *dilettanti* spiders; while the rhapsodies of the blind old bard are living in the brain and heart of

thousands and thousands, who go back to them as the fountain-source of poetry, and as the crystal mirror of an antique world. How is this?

Because the world presented itself to Homer in pictures, to Xenophanes in problems. The one saw existence, enjoyed it, and painted it. The other also saw existence, but questioned it, and wrestled with it. Every trait in Homer is sunny clear; in Xenophanes there is indecision, confusion. In Homer there is a resonance of gladness, a sense of manifold life, activity, and enjoyment. In Xenophanes there is bitterness, activity, but of a spasmodic sort, infinite doubt, and infinite sadness. The one was a poet singing as the bird sings, carolling for very exuberance of life; the other was a Thinker, somewhat also of a fanatic. He did not sing, he recited:

“ Ah! how unlike

To that large utterance of the early Gods!”

That the earnest philosopher should have opposed the sunny poet, opposed him even with bitterness, on account of the degraded actions and motives which he attributed to the gods, is natural; but we must distinguish between this opposition and satire. Xenophanes was bitter, not satirical. The statement derived from Diogenes, that he wrote satires against Homer and Hesiod, is incredible.* Those who think otherwise are referred to the excellent essay of Victor Cousin, before mentioned, or to Ritter.

* Γεγραφε δὲ καὶ ἐν Ἰασιῶν, καὶ ἰλιγγίας, καὶ ἰάμβους κατὰ Ἡσιόδου καὶ Ὀμήρου. Here, says M. Cousin, the word *ἰάμβους* is either an interpolation of a copyist, as Feuerlin and Rossi conjecture, or else it is a mis-statement by Diogenes. *Iambics* could never be the designation of hexameters; and there is not a single iambic verse of his remaining. But in his hexameters he opposes Homer and Hesiod, as we have seen.

Rhapsodising philosophy, and availing himself, for that purpose, of all that the philosophers of his time had discovered, he wandered from place to place, and at last came to Elea, where he settled. Hegel questions this. He says he finds no distinct mention of such a fact in any of the ancient writers: on the contrary, Strabo, in his sixth book, when describing Elea, speaks of Parmenides and Zeno as having lived there, but is silent respecting Xenophanes, which Hegel justly holds to be suspicious. Indeed the words of Diogenes Laertius are vague. He says:—"Xenophanes wrote two thousand verses on the foundation of Colophon, and on a ~~colony~~ colony sent to Elea." This by no means implies that he lived there. Nevertheless, we concur with the modern writers who, from the various connexions with the Eleats observable in his fragments, maintain that he must actually have resided there. The reader is again referred to M. Cousin on this point. Be that as it may, he terminated a long and active life without having solved the great problem. The indecision of his acute mind sowed the seeds of that scepticism which was hereafter to play so large a part in philosophy. All his knowledge enabled him only to know how little he knew. His state of mind is finely described by Timon the sillograph, who puts into the mouth of Xenophanes these words;—

"Oh, that mine were the deep mind, prudent and looking to both sides;
 Long, alas! have I strayed on the road of error, beguiled,
 And am, now, hoary of years, yet exposed to doubt and distraction
 Of all kinds; for, wherever I turn to consider,
 I am lost in the *One and All*.—(ὅς ἐν ταύτῳ τὸ πᾶν ἀνιλεύσῃ).*

* Preserved by Sextus Empiricus: Hypot. Pyrrhon. i. 224; and quoted also by Ritter i. 443.

It now remains for us to state some of the conclusions at which this great man arrived. They will not, perhaps, answer to the reader's expectation; as, with Pythagoras, the reputation for extraordinary wisdom seems ill justified by the fragments of that wisdom which have descended to us. But although to modern science the conclusions of these early thinkers may appear trivial, let us never forget, that it is to these early thinkers that we owe our modern science. Had there not been many a

" Gray spirit yearning in desire
To follow knowledge, like a sinking star,
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought,"*

we should not have been able to travel on the secure terrestrial path of slow inductive science. The impossible has to be proved impossible, before men will consent to limit their endeavours to the compassing of the possible. And it was the cry of despair which escaped from Xenophanes, the cry that nothing can be certainly known, which first called men's attention to the nothingness of knowledge, *as knowledge was then conceived*. Xenophanes thus opens a series of thinkers, which attained its climax in Pyrrho. That he should thus have been at the head of the monotheists, and at the head of the sceptics, is sufficient to entitle his speculations to an extended consideration here.

* Tennyson.

CHAPTER II.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF XENOPHANES.

THE great problem of existence had early presented itself to his mind ; and the resolution of that problem by Thales and Pythagoras, had left him unsatisfied. Neither the physiological nor the mathematical explanation, could still the doubts which rose within him. On all sides he was oppressed with mysteries, which these doctrines could not penetrate. The state of his mind is graphically painted in that one phrase of Aristotle's: " Casting his eyes upwards at the immensity of heaven, he declared that *The One* is God?" Overarching him was the deep blue, infinite vault, immoveable, unchangeable, embracing him, and all things; *that* his heart proclaimed to be God. As Thales had gazed abroad upon the sea, and felt that he was resting on its infinite bosom ; so Xenophanes gazed above him at the sky, and felt that he was encompassed by it. Moreover, it was a great mystery, inviting yet defying scrutiny. The sun and moon whirled to and fro through it; the stars were

"pinnacled dim in its intense inane."

The earth was constantly aspiring to it in the shape of vapour, the souls of men were perpetually aspiring to it with vague yearnings. It was the centre of all existence. It was existence itself. It was *The One*. The Immoveable in whose bosom the Many were moved.

Is not this the explanation of that opinion universally attributed to him, but always variously

interpreted, "God is a sphere?" The Heaven encompassing him and all things, was it not The One Sphere which he proclaimed to be God?

It is very true that this explanation does not exactly accord with his Physics, especially with that part which relates to the earth being a flat surface whose inferior regions are infinite; by which he explained the fixity of the earth. M. Cousin, therefore, in consequence of this discrepancy, would interpret the phrase as metaphorical. "The epithet *spherical* is simply a Greek locution to indicate the perfect equality and absolute unity of God, and of which a sphere may be an image. The *σφαιρικὸς* of the Greeks is the *rotundus* of the Latins. It is a metaphorical expression such as that of *square*, meaning *perfect*: an expression which though now become trivial, had at the birth of mathematical science something noble and elevated in it, and is found in most elevated compositions of poetry. Simonides speaks of a 'man square as to his feet, his hands, and his mind,' meaning an accomplished man; and the metaphor is also used by Aristotle. It is not, therefore, surprising that Xenophanes, a poet as well as a philosopher, writing in verse, and incapable of finding the metaphysical expression which answered to his ideas, should have borrowed from the language of imagination, the expression which would best render his idea."

We should be tempted to adopt this explanation could we be satisfied that the Physics of Xenophanes were precisely what it is said they were, or that they were such at the epoch in which he maintained the sphericity of God. This latter difficulty is insuperable; but has been unobserved by all critics. A man who lives a hundred years, necessarily changes his opinions on such subjects;

and, when opinions are so lightly grounded as were those of philosophers at that epoch, it is but natural to admit that the changes may have been frequent and abrupt. In this special instance, scholars have been aware of the very great and irreconcilable contradictions existing between certain opinions equally authentic; showing him to have been decidedly Physiological (Ionian) in one department, and as decidedly Mathematical (Pythagorean) in another.

As to the case in point, Aristotle's express statement of Xenophanes having "looked up at heaven, and pronounced The One to be God," is manifestly at variance with any belief in the infinity of the lower regions of the earth. The One must be the Infinite.

To return, however, to his monotheism, which is the great peculiarity of his doctrine. He not only destroyed the notion of a multiplicity of Gods, but he proclaimed the self-existence and Intelligence of The One.

God must be Self-existent; for to conceive Being as incipient is impossible. Nothing can be produced from Nothing. Whence, therefore, was Being produced? From itself? No; for then it must have been already in existence to produce itself; otherwise it would have been produced from nothing. Hence the primary law: Being is self-existent. If self-existent, consequently eternal.

As in this it is implied that God is all-powerful, and all-wise; and all-existent; a multiplicity of Gods is inconceivable.

It also follows that God is immoveable, when considered as The All:—

"Wholly unmoved and unmoving it ever remains in the same place,
Without change in its place when at times it changes appearance."

The All must be unmoved ; there is nothing to move it : it cannot move itself ; for, to do so, it must be external to itself.

We must not suppose that he denied motion to finite things because he denied it to the Infinite. He only maintained that The All was unmoved. Finite things were moved by God : " without labour he ruleth all things by reason and insight." His monotheism was carefully distinguished from anthropomorphism, as the verses quoted at page 78, have already exemplified. Let us only further remark on the passage in Diogenes Laertius, wherein he is said to have maintained, that " God did not resemble man ; for he heard and saw all things without *respiration*." This is manifestly in allusion to the doctrine of Anaximenes that the soul was *air*. The intelligence of God, being utterly unlike that of man, is said to be independent of respiration. Only by thus connecting one doctrine with another, can we hope to understand ancient philosophy. It is in vain that we puzzle ourselves with the attempt to penetrate the meaning of these antique fragments of thought, unless we view them in relation to the opinions of their epoch.

This remark applies also to the negative portion of Xenophanes' opinions. We have given above the positive notions at which he arrived in speculating on the great problem of existence. But one peculiarity of his philosophy is its double-sidedness. All the other thinkers abided by the conclusions to which they were led. They were dogmatical ; Xenophanes was sceptical. He was the first who confessed the impotence of reason to compass the wide exalted aims of philosophy. As we said, he was a great earnest spirit struggling with Truth, and, as he obtained a glimpse of her celestial coun-

tenance, he proclaimed his discovery, however it might contradict what he had before announced. Long travel; various experience; examination of different systems; new and contradictory glimpses of the problem he was desirous of solving—these working together, produced in his mind a scepticism of a noble, somewhat touching sort, wholly unlike that of his successors. It was the combat of contradictory opinions in his mind rather than disdain of knowledge. His faith was steady; his opinions vacillating. He had a profound conviction of the existence of an eternal, all-wise, infinite Being; but this belief he was unable to reduce to a consistent formula. There is deep sadness in these verses:

“Certainly no mortal yet knew, and ne'er shall there be one
Knowing both well, the Gods and the All, whose nature we
treat of:

For when, by chance, he at times may utter the true and the
perfect,

He wists not unconscious; *for error is spread over all things.*”

It is in vain that M. Cousin would attempt to prove these verses are not sceptical; especially when so many of the recorded opinions of Xenophanes are of the same tendency. The man who had lived to find his most cherished convictions turn out errors, might well be sceptical of the truth of any of his opinions. But this scepticism was vague; it did not prevent his proclaiming what he held to be the truth; it did not prevent his search after truth.

Nevertheless, as the negative portion of his system had great influence on his successors, we must consider it awhile.

Reason (that is, the Logic of his day) taught him that God, the Infinite, could not be infinite, neither could he be finite. Not infinite, because *non-being*

alone, as having neither beginning, middle, nor end, is unlimited (infinite). Not finite, because one thing can only be limited by another, and God is one, not many.

In like manner did logic teach him, that God was neither moved, nor unmoved. Not moved, because one thing can only be moved by another; and God is one, not many. Not unmoved, because *non-being* alone is unmoved, inasmuch as it neither goes to another, nor does another come to it.

With such verbal quibbles as these did this great thinker darken his conception of the Deity. They were not quibbles to him; they were the real conclusions involved in the premisses from which he reasoned. To have doubted their validity, would have been to doubt the possibility of philosophy. He was not quite prepared for that. And Aristotle characterises this inconsequence by calling him "somewhat clownish" ἀγροικότερος (Met. i. 5); meaning that his conceptions were rude and undigested, instead of being systematized.

Although in the indecision of Xenophanes we see the germs of later scepticism, we are disposed to agree with M. Cousin in discrediting the charge of absolute scepticism—of the incomprehensibility of all things—ἀκαταληψία πάντων. Nevertheless some of M. Cousin's grounds appear to us questionable.*

* *E. g.* He says: "It appears that Sotion, according to Diogenes, attributed to Xenophanes the opinion, all things are incomprehensible; but Diogenes adds that Sotion is wrong on that point."—*Fragments*, p. 89. Now, this is altogether a mis-statement. Diogenes says:—"Sotion pretends that *no one before Xenophanes* maintained the incomprehensibility of all things; but he is wrong."—Diogenes here does not deny that Xenophanes held the opinion, but that any one held it before him.

The reader will, perhaps, have gathered from the foregoing, that Xenophanes was too much in earnest to believe in the incomprehensibility of all things, however the contradictions of his logic might cause him to suspect his and other people's conclusions. Of course, if carried out to their legitimate consequences, his principles lead to absolute scepticism; but he did not so carry them out, and we have no right to charge him with consequences which he himself did not draw. Indeed, it is one of the greatest and commonest of critical errors, to charge the originator or supporter of a doctrine with consequences which he did not see, or would not accept. Because they may be contained in his principles, it by no means follows that he saw them. To give an instance: Spinoza was a very religious man, although his doctrine amounted to atheism, or little better; but his critics have been greatly in the wrong in accusing him of atheism. A man would be ridiculed if he attributed to the discoverer of any law of nature the various discoveries which the *application* of that law might have produced; nevertheless these applications were all potentially existing in the law; but as the discoverer of the law was not aware of them, so he does not get the credit. Why, then, should a man have the *discredit* of consequences contained, indeed, in his principles, but which he himself could not see? On the whole, although Xenophanes was not a clear and systematic thinker, it cannot be denied that he exercised a very remarkable influence on the progress of speculation; as we shall see in his successors.

CHAPTER III.

PARMENIDES.

THE readers of Plato will not forget the remarkable dialogue in which he pays a tribute to the dialectical subtlety of Parmenides ; but we must at the outset caution against any belief in the genuineness of the opinions attributed to him by Plato. If Plato could reconcile to himself the propriety of altering the sentiments of his beloved master Socrates, and of attributing to him such as he had never entertained ; with far greater reason could he put into the mouth of one long dead, sentiments which were the invention of his own dramatic genius. Let us read the "Parmenides," therefore, with extreme caution ; let us prefer the authority of Aristotle, and the verses of Parmenides which have been preserved.

Parmenides was born at Elea, somewhere about the 61st Olympiad. This date does not contradict the rumour which, according to Aristotle, asserted him to have been a disciple of Xenophanes, whom he might have listened to when that great Rhapsodist was far advanced in years. The most positive statement, however, is that by Sotion, of his having been taught by Ameinias and Diochoetes the Pythagorean. But both may be true.

Born to wealth and splendour, enjoying the esteem and envy which always follow splendour and talents, it is conjectured that his early career was that of a dissipated voluptuary ; but Diochoetes

taught him the nothingness of wealth (at times, perhaps, when satiety had taught him the nothingness of enjoyment), and led him from the dull monotony of noisy revelry to the endless variety and excitement of philosophic thought. He forsook the feverish pursuit of enjoyment, to contemplate "the bright countenance of Truth, in the quiet and still air of delightful studies."* But this devotion to study was no egotistical seclusion. It did not prevent his taking an active share in the political affairs of his native city. On the contrary, the fruits of his study were shown in a code of laws which he drew up, and which were deemed so wise and salutary, that the citizens at first yearly renewed their oath to abide by the laws of Parmenides.

"And something greater did his worth obtain;
For fearless virtue bringeth boundless gain."

The first characteristic of his philosophy, is the decided distinction between Truth and Opinion: in other words, between the ideas obtained through the Reason and those obtained through Sense. In Xenophanes we noticed a vague glimmering of this notion. In Parmenides it attained to something like clearness. In Xenophanes it contrived to throw an uncertainty over all things; which, in a logical thinker, would have become absolute scepticism. But he was saved from scepticism by his faith. Parmenides was saved from it by his philosophy. He was perfectly aware of the deceitful nature of opinion; but he was also aware that within him there were certain ineradicable convictions, in which, like Xenophanes, he had perfect faith, but which he wished to explain by reason.

* Milton.

Thus was he led in some sort to anticipate the celebrated doctrine of *innate ideas*. These ideas were concerning necessary truths ; they were true knowledge. All other ideas were uncertain.

The Eleatæ, as Ritter remarks, believed that they recognised and could demonstrate that the truth of all things is one and unchangeable ; perceiving, however, that the human faculty of thought is constrained to follow the appearance of things, and to apprehend the changeable and the many, they were forced to confess that we are unable fully to comprehend the divine truth in its reality, although we may rightly apprehend a few general principles. Nevertheless, to suppose, in conformity with human thought, that there is actually both a plurality and a change, would be but a delusion of the senses. While, on the other hand, we must acknowledge, that in all that appears to us as manifold and changeable, including all particular thought as evolved in the mind, the Godlike is present, unperceived indeed by human blindness, and become, as it were beneath a veil, indistinguishable.

We may make this conception more intelligible if we recal the mathematical tendency of the whole of this school. Their knowledge of Physics was regarded as contingent—delusive. Their knowledge of Mathematics eternal—self-evident. Parmenides was thus led by Xenophanes on the one hand, and Diochætes on the other, to the conviction of the duality of human thought. His reason—*i. e.*, the Pythagorean logic—taught him, that there is naught existing but The One (which he did not, with Xenophanes, call God, but Being). His sense, on the other hand, taught him, that there were Many Things, because of his manifold sensuous

impressions. Hence he maintained two Causes and two Principles. The one to satisfy the Reason; the other to accord with the explanations of Sense. His work on 'Nature' was therefore divided into two parts: in the first is expounded the absolute Truth as Reason proclaims it; in the second, human Opinion, accustomed to

"Follow the rash eye, and ears with ringing sounds confused, and tongue,"

which is but a mere *seeming* (δόξα, appearance); nevertheless, there is a cause of this seeming; there is also a principle; consequently, there is a doctrine appropriate to it.

It must not be imagined, that Parmenides had a mere vague and general notion of the uncertainty of human knowledge. He maintained that thought was delusive because dependent upon organization. He had as distinct a conception of this celebrated theory as any of his later imitators, as may be seen in the passage preserved by Aristotle. Here is the passage.

Aristotle, in the 5th chap. 4th book of his *Metaphysics*, is speaking of the materialism of Democritus, in whose system sensation was thought; he adds, that others have shared this opinion, and proceeds thus: "Empedocles affirms, that a change in our condition (τὴν εἶεν) causes a change in our thought:

"Thought is in men according to the impression of the moment;"*

"and, in another passage, he says:—

"It is always according to the changes which take place in men

That there is change in their thoughts.'"

* πρὸς παρὸν γὰρ μῆτις αἰξεται ἀνθρώποισι.

Parmenides expresses himself in the same style :

“Such as to each man is the nature of his many-jointed limbs, Such also is the intelligence of each man ; for it is The nature of limbs (organization) which thinketh in men, Both in one and in all : for the highest degree of organization gives the highest degree of thought.”*

Now, as thought was dependent on organization, and as each organization differed in degree from every other, so would the opinions of men differ. If thought be sensation, it requires little reflection to show, that, as sensations of the same object differ according to the senses of different persons, and indeed differ at different times with the same person, therefore one opinion is not more true than another, and all are equally false. But Reason is the same in all men. That alone is the fountain of certain knowledge. All thought derived from sense is but a *seeming* (δόξα). But thought derived from Reason is absolutely true. Hence his antithesis to δόξα is always πίστις, *faith*.

This is the central point in his system. He was thereby enabled to avert absolute scepticism, and at the same time to admit the uncertainty of ordinary knowledge. He had therefore two distinct doctrines, each proportioned to the faculty adapted to it. One doctrine of Absolute Knowledge (Metaphysics, μετὰ τὰ φυσικά) with which the faculty

* The last sentence, “for the highest degree of organization gives the highest degree of thought,” is a translation which, differing from that of every other we have seen, and being, as we believe, of some importance in the interpretation of Parmenides’ system, we have deemed it necessary to state at full our reasons in a note, for which the reader is referred to the Appendix. It would be inconsistent with our plan to interrupt the exposition with critical remarks of the kind.—See ‘Appendix B.’

of pure Reason was concerned, a doctrine called in the language of that day, the "science of Being." The other doctrine of Relative Knowledge, or Opinion (Physics, *τα φυσικά*) with which the faculty of Intelligence, or Thought, derived from Sense, was concerned, and which may be called the science of Appearance.

On the science of Being, Parmenides did not differ much from his predecessors Xenophanes and Pythagoras. He taught that there was but one Being; and that non-Being was impossible. The latter assertion amounts to saying that non-existence cannot exist. A position which will appear extremely trivial to the reader not versed in metaphysical speculations; but which we would not have him despise, inasmuch as it is a valuable piece of evidence respecting the march of human opinion. It is only one of the many illustrations of the tendency to attribute positive qualities to words, as if they were *things*, and not simply *marks* of things. A tendency admirably exposed by James Mill, and subsequently by his son.* It was this tendency which so greatly puzzled the early thinkers, who, when they said that "a thing *is* not," believed that they nevertheless predicated existence, viz. the

* "Many volumes might be filled with the frivolous speculations concerning the nature of Being (*τὸ ὄν οὐσία*, *Ens Entitas, Essentia*, and the like), which have arisen from overlooking this double meaning of the words *to be*; from supposing that when it signifies *to exist*, and when it signifies *to be* some specified thing, as *to be* a man, *to be* Socrates, *to be* seen, *to be* a phantom, or even *to be* a nonentity, it must still at the bottom answer to the same idea; and that a meaning must be found for it which shall suit all these cases."—*John Mill, System of Logic, Ratiocinative and Inductive*, vol. i. p. 104.

existence of non-existence. A thing *is*; and a thing *is not*. These two assertions seemed to be affirmations of two different states of existence. An error from which, under some shape or other, later thinkers have not been free.

Parmenides, however, though affirming that Being alone existed, and that non-Being was impossible, did not see the real ground of the sophism. He argued that non-Being could not be, because Nothing can come out of Nothing (as Xenophanes taught him); as therefore Being existed, it must embrace all existence.

Hence he concluded that The One was all existence, identical, unique, neither born nor dying, neither moving nor changing. It was a bold step to postulate the finity of The One, whom Xenophanes had declared to be necessarily infinite. But we have abundant evidence to prove that Parmenides regarded The One as finite. Aristotle speaks of it as the distinction between Parmenides and Melissos: "The unity of Parmenides was a *rational* unity (τοῦ κατὰ λόγον ἐνός). That of Melissos was a *material* unity (τοῦ κατὰ τὴν ὕλην). Hence the former said that The One was finite (πεπερασμένον) but the latter said it was infinite (ἄπειρον)." From which it appears that the ancients conceived the Rational unity as limited by itself; a conception it is difficult for us to understand. Probably it was because they held The One to be spherical: all the parts being equal: having neither beginning, middle, nor end: and yet self-limited.

His conception of the identity of thought and existence is expressed in some remarkable verses, of which, as a very different opinion has been drawn from them, we shall give a literal translation.

“Thought is the same thing as the cause of thought:
 For without the thing in which it is announced
 You cannot find the thought; for there is nothing, nor shall
 be—
 Except the existing.”

Now, as the only Existence was The One, it follows that The One and Thought are identical. A conclusion which by no means contradicts the opinion before noticed of the identity of human thought and sensation; both of these being merely transitory modes of existence.

Respecting the second or physical doctrine of Parmenides, we may briefly say that, believing it necessary to give a science of Appearances, he sketched out a programme according to the principles reigning in his day. He denied motion in the abstract, but admitted that according to appearance there was motion.

Parmenides represents the logical and more rigorous side of the doctrine of Xenophanes, from which the physiological element is almost banished, by being condemned to the region of uncertain sense—Knowledge. The ideal element alone was really nourished by the speculations of Parmenides. Although he preserved himself from scepticism, as we saw, nevertheless, the tendency of his doctrine was to forward scepticism. In his exposition of the uncertainty of knowledge, he retained a saving clause: that, namely, of the certainty of Reason. It only remained for successors to apply the same scepticism to the ideas of Reason, and Pyrrhonism was complete.

CHAPTER IV.

ZENO OF ELEA.

ZENO, by Plato called the Palamedes of Elea, must not be confounded with Zeno the Stoic. He was on all accounts one of the most distinguished of the ancient philosophers; as great in his actions as in his works; and remarkable in each, for a strong, impetuous, disinterested spirit. Born at Elea, about the 68th or 69th Olympiad, he became the pupil of Parmenides, and, as some say, the adopted son.

The first period of his life was spent in the calm solitudes of study. From his beloved friend and master he had learned to appreciate the superiority of intellectual pleasures: the only pleasures that do not satiate. From him also he had learned to despise the tinsel splendours of rank and fortune, without becoming misanthropical or egotistical. He worked for the benefit of his fellow men. He only declined the recompense of rank or worldly honours with which they would have repaid those labours. His recompense was the voice of his own heart, thus beating calmly in the consciousness of its integrity. The absence of ambition in so fiery and exalted a mind, might well have been the wonderment of antiquity; for it was no sceptical indifference or disdain for the opinions of his fellow men, which made him shun office. His was a delicate no less than an impetuous soul, extremely

sensitive to praise and blame; as may be seen in his admirable reply to one who asked him why he was so hurt by blame: "If the blame of my fellow citizens did not cause me pain, their approbation would not cause me pleasure." In timid minds that shrink from the coarse ridicule of fools and knaves, this sensitiveness is fatal; but in those brave spirits who fear nothing but their own consciences, and who accept no approbation but such as their consciences can ratify, this sensitiveness lies at the root of heroism, and all noble endeavour. One of those men was Zeno. His life was a battle, but the battle was for Truth; it ended tragically, but it had not been in vain.

Perhaps of all his moral qualities his patriotism has been the most renowned. He lived at the period of Liberty's awakening, when Greece was everywhere enfranchising herself, everywhere loosening the Persian yoke, and endeavouring to found national institutions on Liberty. In the general effervescence and enthusiasm Zeno was not cold. His political activity we have no means of judging; but we know that it was great and beneficial. Elea was but a small colony; but Zeno preferred it to the magnificence of Athens, whose luxurious, restless, quibbling, frivolous, passionate, and unprincipled citizens, he contrasted with the provincial modesty and honesty of Elea.

He did, however, occasionally visit Athens, and there promulgated the doctrines of his master, as we see by the opening of Plato's dialogue, the 'Parmenides.' Zeno also taught Pericles.

On the occasion of his last return to Elea he found it had fallen into the hands of the tyrant Nearchus (or Diomedon, or Demylos; the name

is differently given by ancient writers). He, of course, conspired against him, failed in his project, and was captured. It was then, as Cicero observes, that he proved the excellence of his master's doctrines, and proved that a courageous soul fears only that which is base, and that fear and pain are for women and children, or men who have feminine hearts. When Nearchus interrogated him as to his accomplices, he threw the tyrant into an agony of doubt and fear by naming all the courtiers: a masterstroke of audacity, and in those days not discreditable. Having thus terrified his accuser, he turned to the spectators, and exclaiming: "If you can consent to be slaves from fear of what you see me now suffer, I can only wonder at your cowardice." So saying, he bit his tongue off, and spat it in the face of the tyrant. The people were so roused that they fell upon Nearchus and slew him.

There are considerable variations in the accounts of this story by ancient writers, but all agree in the main narrative given above. Some say that Zeno was pounded to death in a huge mortar. We have no other account of his death.

As a philosopher, Zeno's merits are peculiar. He was the inventor of that logic so celebrated as *Dialectics*. This, which, in the hands of Socrates and Plato, became so powerful a weapon of offence, is, by the universal consent of antiquity, ascribed to Zeno. It may be defined as, "A refutation of error by the *reductio ad absurdum* as a means of establishing the truth." The truth to be established in Zeno's case was the system of Parmenides; we must not, therefore, seek in his arguments for ~~any-~~thing beyond the mere exercise of dialectical sub-

any novelty

tlety. He brought nothing new to the system; but he invented a great method of polemical exposition. The system had been conceived by Xenophanes; had rigorous precision given to it by Parmenides; and there only remained for Zeno the task of fighting for and defending it; which task, as Cousin says, he admirably fulfilled. "The destiny of Zeno was altogether polemical. Hence, in the external world, the impetuous existence and the tragical end of the patriot; and, in the internal world, the world of thought, the laborious character of Dialectician."*

It was this fighter's destiny which caused him to perfect the art of offence and defence. He very naturally wrote in *prose*; of which he set the first example: for, as the wild and turbulent enthusiasm of Xenophanes would instinctively express itself in poetry, so would the argumentative subtlety of Zeno naturally express itself in prose. The great Rhapsodist wandered from city to city, intent upon earnest and startling enunciation of the mighty thoughts that were stirring confusedly within him; the great Logician was more intent upon a convincing exposition of the futility of the arguments alleged against his system, than upon any propaganda of the system itself; for he held that the truth must be accepted when once error is exposed. "Antiquity," says M. Cousin, "attests that he wrote not poems, like Xenophanes and Parmenides, but treatises, and treatises of an eminently prosaic character, that is to say, refutations."

The reason of this may be easily guessed. Coming, as a young man to Athens, to preach the doctrine

* Cousin, 'Fragmens Philos.'—art., *Zénon d'Elée*, an essay well worth reading.

of Parmenides, he must have been startled at the opposition which that doctrine met with from the subtle, quick-witted, and empirical Athenians, who had already erected the Ionian philosophy into the reigning doctrine. Zeno, no doubt, was at first stunned by the noisy objections which on all sides surrounded him; but, being also one of the keenest of wits, and one of the readiest, he would soon have recovered his balance, and in turn assailed his assailers. Instead of teaching dogmatically, he began to teach dialectically. Instead of resting in the domain of pure science, and expounding the ideas of Reason, he descended upon the ground occupied by his adversaries—the ground of daily experience and sense-knowledge, and, turning their ridicule upon themselves, forced them to admit that it was more easy to conceive The Many as a produce of The One, than to conceive The One on the assumption of the existing many. Hence his discovery of his Dialectics.

“The polemical method entirely disconcerted the partisans of the Ionian philosophy,” says M. Cousin, “and excited a lively curiosity and interest for the doctrines of the Italian (Pythagorean) school; and thus was sown in the capital of Greek civilization the fruitful germ of a higher development of philosophy.”

Plato has succinctly characterized the difference between Parmenides and Zeno by saying, that the master established the existence of The One, and the disciple proved the non-existence of The Many.

When he argued that there was but One thing really existing, all the others being only modifications or appearances of that One, he did not deny that there were *many appearances*, he only denied

their being real existences. So, in like manner, he denied motion, but not the appearance of motion. Diogenes the Cynic, who rose and walked, as a refutation of Zeno, entirely mistook the argument; his walking was no more a refutation of Zeno, than Dr. Johnson's kicking a stone was a refutation of Berkeley's denial of matter. Zeno would have answered: Very true: you walk: according to Opinion (*το δοξάσιον*), you are in motion; but according to Reason you are at rest. What you call motion is but the *name* given to a series of similar conditions, each of which, separately considered, is *rest*. Thus, every object filling space equal to its bulk is necessarily at rest in that space; motion from one spot to another is but a name given to the *sum total* of all these *intermediate spaces* in which *the object at each moment is at rest*. Take the illustration of the circle: a circle is composed of a number of individual points, or straight lines; not one of these lines can individually be called a circle; but all these lines, considered as a totality, have one general name given them, viz., a circle. In the same way, in each individual point of space the object is at rest; the sum total of a number of these states of rest is called motion.

The fallacy is in the supposition, that Motion is a *thing*, whereas, as Zeno clearly saw, it is only a *condition*. In a falling stone there is not the "stone" and a thing called "motion;" otherwise there would be also another thing called "rest." But both motion and rest are names given to express conditions of the stone. Modern science has proved that even rest is a positive exertion of *force*. Rest is force resistant, and Motion is force triumphant. It follows that matter is always in motion: which amounts

to the same as Zeno's saying, there is no such thing as motion.

The other arguments of Zeno against the possibility of Motion (and he maintained four, the third of which we have above explained), are given by Aristotle; but they *seem* more like the ingenious puzzles of dialectical subtlety than the real arguments of an earnest man. It has, therefore, been asserted, that they were only brought forward to ridicule the unskilfulness of his adversaries. We must not, however, be hasty in rescuing Zeno from his own logical net, into which he may have fallen as easily as others. Greater men than he have been the dupe of their own verbal distinctions.

Here are his two first arguments:—

1st, Motion is impossible, because before that which is in motion can reach the end, it must reach the middle point; but this middle point then becomes the end, and the same objection applies to it: since to reach it the object in motion must traverse a middle point; and so on *ad infinitum*, seeing that matter is infinitely divisible. Thus, if a stone be cast four paces, before it can reach the fourth it must reach the second; the second then becomes the end, and the first pace the middle; but before the object can reach the first pace it must reach the half of the first pace, and before the half it must reach the half of that half; and so on *ad infinitum*.

2nd, This is his famous Achilles puzzle. We give both the statement and refutation as we find it in John Mill's 'Logic' (vol. ii. p. 453).

The argument is, let Achilles run ten times as fast as a tortoise, yet, if the tortoise has the start, Achilles will never overtake him; for, suppose them to be at first separated by an interval of a



thousand feet ; when Achilles has run these thousand feet the tortoise will have run a hundred, and when Achilles has run those hundred the tortoise will have got on ten, and so on for ever : therefore Achilles may run for ever without overtaking the tortoise.

Now the "for ever" in the conclusion means, for any length of time that can be supposed ; but in the premisses "ever" does not mean any *length* of time ; it means any *number of subdivisions of time*. It means that we may divide a thousand feet by ten, and that quotient again by ten, and so on as often as we please ; that there never need be an end to the subdivisions of the distance, nor, consequently, to those of the time in which it is performed. But an unlimited number of subdivisions may be made of that which is itself limited. The argument proves no other infinity of duration than may be embraced within five minutes. As long as the five minutes are not expired, what remains of them may be divided by ten, and again by ten as often as we like, which is perfectly compatible with there being only five minutes altogether. It proves, in short, that to pass through this finite space requires *a time which is infinitely divisible*, but not an *infinite time* ; the confounding of which distinction Hobbes had already seen to be the gist of the fallacy.

Although the credit of seeing the ground of the fallacy is given to Hobbes in the above passage, we must also observe, that Aristotle had clearly seen it in the same light. His answer to Zeno, which Bayle thinks "pitiable," was, that a foot of space being only *potentially infinite*, but *actually finite*, it could be easily traversed in a *finite time*.

We have no space to follow Zeno in his various

arguments against the existence of a multitude of things. His position may be briefly summed up thus : —There is but one being existing, who is necessarily indivisible and infinite. To suppose that The One is divisible, is to suppose it finite. If divisible, it must be infinitely divisible. But, suppose two things to exist, then there must necessarily be an interval between those two, something separating and limiting them. What is that something? It is some *other* thing. But, then, if not the *same* thing, it *also* must be separated and limited; and so on *ad infinitum*. Thus only One thing can exist as the *substratum* for all manifold appearances.

Zeno closes the second great line of independent inquiry, which, opened by Anaximander, and continued by Pythagoras, Xenophanes, and Parmenides, we may characterize as the Mathematical or Absolute system. Its opposition to the Ionian, Physiological or Empirical system was radical and constant. But, up to the coming of Zeno, these two systems had been developed almost in parallel lines, so little influence did they exert upon each other. The two systems clashed together on the arrival of Zeno at Athens. The result of the conflict was the creation of a new method,—Dialectics. This method created the Sophists and the Sceptics. It also greatly influenced all succeeding schools, and may be said to have constituted one great peculiarity of Socrates and Plato, as will be shown.

We must, however, previously trace the intermediate steps which philosophy took, before the crisis of sophistry, which preceded the era of Socrates.

THE SECOND EPOCH.

SPECULATIONS ON THE CREATION OF THE
UNIVERSE; AND ON THE ORIGIN OF
KNOWLEDGE.

CHAP. I. HERACLITUS.

CHAP. II. ANAXAGORAS.

CHAP. III. EMPEDOCLES.

CHAP. IV. DEMOCRITUS.

THE SECOND EPOCH.

CHAPTER I.

HERACLITUS.

“**LIFE** is a comedy to those who think, a tragedy to those who feel.” This, Horace Walpole’s epigram, may be applied to Democritus and Heraclitus, celebrated throughout antiquity as the laughing and the weeping philosophers.

“ One pitied—one condemned the woful times ;
One laugh’d at follies, and one wept o’er crimes.”

Modern criticism has indeed pronounced both these characteristics to be fabulous ; but fables themselves are only exaggerations of truth, and there must have been something in each of these philosophers which formed the nucleus round which the fables grew. Of Heraclitus it has been well said, “ The vulgar notion of him as the crying philosopher must not be wholly discarded, as if it meant nothing, or had no connexion with the history of his speculations. The thoughts which came forth in his system are like fragments torn from his own personal being, and not torn from it without such an effort and violence as must needs have drawn a sigh from the sufferer.

“ If Anaximenes discovered that he had within him a power and principle which ruled over all the

acts and functions of his bodily frame, Heraclitus found that there was a life within him which he could not call his own, and yet it was, in the very highest sense, *himself*, so that without it he would have been a poor, helpless, isolated creature; an universal life, which connected him with his fellow-men, with the absolute source and original fountain of life." *

Heraclitus was the son of Blyson, and was born at Ephesus, about the 69th Olymp. Of a haughty melancholy temper, he refused the supreme magistracy which his fellow-citizens offered him, on account of their dissolute morals, according to Diogenes Laertius; but, as he declined the offer in favour of his brother, we are disposed to think his rejection was grounded on some other cause. Is not his rejection of magistracy in perfect keeping with what else we know of him? For instance: Playing with some children near the temple of Diana, he answered those who expressed surprise at seeing him thus occupied, "Is it not better to play with children, than to share with you the administration of affairs?" The contempt which pierces through this reply, and which subsequently became confirmed misanthropy, is rather the result of morbid meditation, than of virtuous scorn. Was it because the citizens were corrupt that he refused to exert himself to make them virtuous? Was it because the citizens were corrupt that he retired to the mountains, and there lived on herbs and roots, like an ascetic? If Ephesus was dissolute, was there not the rest of Greece for him to make a home of? He fled to the mountains, that he might there, in secret, prey on his own heart. He was a misan-

* 'Ency. Metrop.'

throe; but misanthropy is madness, not virtuous indignation; misanthropy is a morbid consciousness of self, not a sorrowful opinion formed of others. The aim of his life had been, as he says, to explore the depths of his own nature. This has been the aim of all ascetics, as of all philosophers: but in the former it is *morbid* anatomy; in the latter it is science.

The contemptuous letter in which he declined the courteous invitation of Darius to spend some time at his court, will best explain our view of his character:—

“ Heraclitus of Ephesus to the King Darius, son of Hystaspes, health!

“All men depart from the paths of truth and justice. They have no attachment of any kind but avarice; they only aspire to a vain-glory with the obstinacy of folly. As for me, I know not malice; I am the envy of no one. I utterly despise the vanity of courts, and never will place my foot on Persian ground. Content with little, I live as I please.”

Misanthropy was the nucleus of the fable of Heraclitus as a weeping philosopher, who refused the magistracy because the citizens were corrupt. More than this we cannot ascertain. The story of his attempting to cure himself of a dropsy by throwing himself on a dunghill, hoping that the heat would cause the water within him to evaporate, is apocryphal.

The Philosophy of Heraclitus was, and is, the subject of dispute. He expressed himself in such enigmatical terms, that he was called “the Obscure.” A few fragments have been handed down

to us.* From these it would be vain to hope that a consistent system could be evolved; but from them and from other sources we may gather the general tendency of his doctrines.

The tradition which assigns him Xenophanes as a teacher is borne out by the evident relation of their systems. Heraclitus is somewhat more Ionian than Xenophanes, that is to say, in him the physiological explanation of the universe is more prominent than the Eleatic explanation; at the same time, Heraclitus is neither frankly an Ionian, nor an Italian; he wavers between the two. The pupil of Xenophanes would naturally regard human knowledge as a mist of error, through which the sunlight only gleamed at intervals. But the inheritor of the Ionian doctrines would not adopt the conclusion of the Mathematical school, viz., that the cause of this uncertainty of knowledge, was the uncertainty of sensuous impressions; and that consequently Reason was the only fountain of truth. Heraclitus was not mathematician enough for such a doctrine. He was led to maintain a doctrine directly opposed to it. He maintained that the senses are the sources of all true knowledge, for they drink in the universal intelligence. The senses deceive only when they belong to barbarian souls; in other words, the ill-educated sense gives false impressions; the rightly-educated sense gives truth. Whatever is common is true; whatever is remote from the common, i. e. the exceptional, is false. The True is the Unhidden.† Those whose senses

* Schleiermacher has collected, and endeavoured to interpret them, in Wolf and Butmann's 'Museum der Alterthumswissenschaften,' vol. i. part iii.

† ἀληθὲς τὸ μὴ ληθόν. This play upon words is very characteristic of metaphysical thinkers, and is common to all ages.

are open to receive the Unhidden, the Universal, attain truth.

As if to mark the distinction between himself and Xenophanes more forcibly, he says : " Inhaling through the breath the Universal Ether, which is Divine Reason, we become conscious. In sleep we are unconscious ; but on waking we again become intelligent : for, in sleep, when the organs of sense are closed, the mind within is shut out from all sympathy with the surrounding ether, the universal Reason ; and the only connecting medium is the breath, as it were a root ; and by this separation the mind loses the power of recollection it before possessed. Nevertheless, on awakening, the mind repairs its memory through the senses, as it were through inlets ; and thus, coming into contact with the surrounding ether, it resumes its intelligence. As fuel when brought near the fire is altered and becomes fiery, but, on being removed, again becomes quickly extinguished : so too the portion of the all-embracing which sojourns in our body becomes more irrational when separated from it ; but, on the restoration of this connexion, through its many pores or inlets, it again becomes similar to the whole."

Can anything be more opposed to the Eleatic doctrine ? That system rests on the certitude of pure Reason ; this declares that Reason left to itself, *i. e.* the mind when it is not nourished by the senses, can have no true knowledge. The one system is exclusively rational, the other exclusively material ; but both are pantheistical, for in both it is the universal Intelligence which becomes conscious in man. A conception pushed to its ultimate limits by Hegel. Accordingly, Hegel declares that

there is not a single point in the Logic of Heraclitus which he, Hegel, has not developed in his Logic.

The reader will remark how in Heraclitus, as in Parmenides, there is opened the great question which for so long agitated the schools, and which still agitates them,—the question respecting the origin of our ideas. He will also remark how the two great parties, into which thinkers have divided themselves on the question, are typified in these two early thinkers. In Parmenides the idealist school, with its contempt of sense; in Heraclitus the materialist school, with its contempt of every thing not derived from sensation.

With Xenophanes, Heraclitus agreed in denouncing the perpetual delusion which reigned in the mind of man; but he placed the cause of that delusion in the imperfection of human Reason, not—as Xenophanes had done—in the imperfection of the senses. He thought that man had too little of the Divine Ether (soul) within him. Xenophanes thought that the senses clouded the intellectual vision: the one counselled man to let the Universal mirror itself in his soul through the senses; the other counselled him to shut himself up within himself, to disregard the senses, and to commune only with ideas.

It seems strange that so palpable a contradiction between two doctrines should ever have been overlooked. Yet such is the fact. Heraclitus is said to have regarded the world of sense as a perpetual delusion; and this is said in the very latest and not the least intelligent of Histories, to say nothing of former works. Whence this opinion? Simply from the admitted scepticism of both Heraclitus and Xenophanes, with respect to Phenomena (appear-

ances). It is true they both denied the certainty of human knowledge; but they denied this on different grounds. "Man has no certain knowledge," said Heraclitus; "but God has; and vain man learns from God just as the boy from the man." In his conception human intelligence was but a portion of the Universal Intelligence; but a part can never be otherwise than imperfect. Hence it is that the opinion of all mankind upon any subject (common sense) must be a nearer approximation to the truth, than the opinion of any individual; because it is an accumulation of parts, making a nearer approach to the Whole.

Another deviation from the doctrine of Xenophanes, and one consequent on his view of sense-knowledge, was the attributing to God a distinctive element and activity. Xenophanes arrived at the conception of Unity, and that Unity he named God. But he did not imitate his Ionian teachers, and clothe that Unity in some material element. He called it simply The One, or God. Heraclitus clothed his Unity. He called it Fire. To him Fire was the type of spontaneous force and activity; not flame, which was only an intensity of Fire, but a warm, dry vapour—an Ether; this was his Beginning. He says: "The world was made neither by God* nor man; and it was, and is, and ever shall be, an ever-living fire in due measure self-unkindled, and in due measure self-extinguished." How clearly this is but a modification of the Ionian system, the reader will at once discern. The Fire, which here stands as the demi-symbol of Life and

* This is the translation given by Ritter: it is not, however, exact; *οὐτε τις θεῶν* is the original: i. e. "neither one of the Gods," meaning, of course, one of the Polytheistic Deities.

Intelligence, because of its spontaneous activity, is but a modification of the Water of Thales, and the Air of Anaximenes; moreover, it is only demisymbolical. Those who accept it as a pure symbol overlook the other parts of the system. The system which proclaims the senses as the source of all knowledge, necessarily attaches itself to a material element as the primary one. At the same time this very system is in one respect a deviation from the Ionian; in the distinction between sense-knowledge and reflective knowledge. Hence we placed Diogenes of Apollonia as the last of the pure Ionians; although, chronologically, he came some time after Heraclitus, and his doctrine is in many respects the same as that of Heraclitus.

The Scepticism of phenomena which made the Eleatics declare that all opinion was delusion of the senses assumed a different aspect in Heraclitus. Declaring the great Being, The One, the Cause of All to be Fire, ever self-enkindled, and ever self-extinguished, both in due measure, he was led to pronounce that all things were in a perpetual *flux*. This phrase had great celebrity. "All is," said he, "and is not; for, though in truth it does come into being, yet it forthwith ceases to be." This has been variously interpreted. Hegel declares that it is a distinct affirmation of the ground-principle of Logic, viz. that *das Seyn ist das Nichts*.*

* *i. e.* "Being and non-Being are the same;" this is in contra-distinction to the position 'Nothing can come from Nothing.' When Hegel said that 'Existence was Nothing,' he did not mean that Existence was No-Existence, as those who so feebly ridicule him, suppose him to have meant. Nothing was *No Thing*, *i. e.* no *phenomenon*. Few persons will question the Logician's right to treat of Existence *per se* (*das Seyn*) and Existence *per aliud*, that is, existing things.

It is very obscure, but seems to us only an enigmatical expression of his theory of *flux*: that nothing is but is always *becoming*. The Fire is perpetually kindling and extinguishing, *i. e.* Existence is constantly changing its phenomena—its *modes* of existence. The carbon in the air nourishes plants; plants nourish men; men breathe back the carbon into the air to nourish fresh plants. This is an illustration of the *flux*; is it not also of the phrase: “It comes into being, yet forthwith ceases to be”? Take his beautiful illustration of a River: “No one has ever been twice on the same stream; for different waters are constantly flowing down; it dissipates its waters and gathers them again—it approaches and it recedes—it overflows and fails.” This is evidently but a statement of the flux and reflux, as in his aphorism that “all is in motion; there is no rest or quietude.” Let us also add here what Ritter says:

“The notion of life implies that of alteration, which by the ancients was generally conceived as motion. The Universal Life is therefore an eternal motion, and therefore tends, as every motion must, towards some end, even though this end, in the course of the evolution of life, present itself to us as a mere transition to some ulterior end. Heraclitus on this ground supposed a certain longing to be inherent in Fire, to gratify which it constantly transformed itself into some determinate form of being, without, however, any wish to maintain it, but in the mere desire of transmuting itself from one form into another. Therefore to make worlds is Jove’s pastime.”

There are some other tenets of his on this point which are but vaguely connected with the above.

He explained phenomena as the concurrence of opposite tendencies and efforts in the emotion of the everliving Fire, out of which results the most beautiful harmony. All is composed of contraries, so that the good is also evil, the living is dead, &c. The harmony of the world is one of conflicting impulses, like that of the lyre and the bow. The strife between opposite tendencies is the parent of all things.

The view we have taken of Heraclitus' doctrines will at once explain the order of development in which we have placed them, contrary to the practice of our predecessors. He stands with one foot on the Ionian path, and with the other on the Italian ; but his attempt is not to unite these two : his office is negative ; he has to criticise both.

CHAPTER II.

ANAXAGORAS.

ANAXAGORAS is generally said to have been born at Clazomene in Lydia, not far from Colophon. Inheriting from his family a splendid patrimony, he seemed born to figure in the State; but, like Parmenides, he disregarded all such external greatness, and placed his ambition elsewhere. Early in life, so early as his twentieth year, the passion for philosophy engrossed him. Like all young ambitious men, he looked with contempt upon the intellect exhibited in his native city. His soul panted for the capital. The busy activity, and the growing importance of Athens, solicited him. He yearned towards it, as the ambitious youth in a provincial town yearns for London; in a word, as all energy longs for a fitting theatre on which to play its part.

He came to Athens. It was a great and stirring epoch. The countless hosts of Persia had been scattered by a handful of resolute men. The political importance of Greece, and of Athens the Queen of Greece, was growing to a climax. The Age of Pericles, one of the most glorious in the long annals of mankind, was dawning. The Poems of Homer formed the subject of literary conversation, and of silent heartfelt enjoyment. The early triumphs of Æschylus had created a Drama, such as still remains the wonder and delight of scholars and critics. The young Sophocles, that perfect flower of antique art, was then in his bloom, meditating on that art which he was hereafter to bring to per-

fection in the *Antigone* and the *Philoctetes*. The Ionian philosophy had found a home there; and the young Anaxagoras shared his time with Homer and Anaximenes.*

Philosophy soon obtained the supreme place in his affections. The mysteries of the universe tempted him. He yielded himself to the fascination, and declared that the aim and purpose of his life was to contemplate the heavens. All care for his affairs was given up. His estates ran to waste, whilst he was solving problems. But the day he found himself a beggar, he exclaimed: "To Philosophy I owe my worldly ruin, and my soul's prosperity." He commenced teaching, and he had illustrious pupils in Pericles, Euripides, and Socrates.

He was not long without paying the penalty of success. The envy and uncharitableness of some, joined to the bigotry of others, caused an accusation of impiety to be brought against him. He was tried and condemned to death; but owed the mitigation of his sentence into banishment to the eloquence of his friend and pupil, Pericles. Some have supposed that the cause of his persecution was this very friendship of Pericles; and that the statesman was struck at through the unpopular philosopher. The supposition is gratuitous, and belongs,

* By this we no more intimate that he was a *disciple* of Anaximenes (as most historians assert) than that he was a friend of Homer. But in some such ambiguous phrase as that in the text, must the error of calling him the disciple of Anaximenes have arisen. Brucker's own chronology is strangely at variance with his statement: for he places the birth of Anaximenes, 56th Olymp.; that of Anaxagoras, 70th Olymp.: thus making master fifty-six years old at the birth of the pupil; and the pupil only became such in the middle of his life. So little criticism have historians bestowed on the simplest facts!

rather, to the perverted ingenuity of modern scholarship, than to the sober facts of history. In the persecution of Anaxagoras we see nothing but what was very natural, what occurred afterwards in the case of Socrates, and what has subsequently occurred a thousand times in the history of mankind. It is the simple effect of outraged convictions. Anaxagoras controverted the religion of his time: he was tried and condemned in consequence.

After his banishment he resided in Lampsacus, and there preserved his tranquillity of mind until his death. "It is not I who have lost the Athenians; it is the Athenians who have lost me," was his proud reflection. He continued his studies, and was highly respected by the citizens, who, wishing to pay some mark of esteem to his memory, asked him, on his death-bed, in what manner they could do so? He begged that the day of his death might be annually kept as a holiday in all the schools of Lampsacus. For centuries this request was fulfilled. He died in his seventy-third year. A tomb was erected to him in the city with this inscription:—

"This tomb great Anaxagoras confines,
Whose mind explored the heavenly paths of Truth."

His philosophy contains so many contradictory principles, or perhaps it would be more correct to say, that so many contradictory principles are attributed to him, that it would be vain to attempt a systematic view of them. We shall, as usual, confine ourselves to leading doctrines.

On the great subject of the origin and certainty of our knowledge, he differs from Xenophanes and Heraclitus. He thought, with the former, that all our sense-knowledge is delusive; and, with the latter, that all our knowledge comes through the

senses. Here is a double scepticism brought into play. It has usually been held that these two opinions contradict each other; that he could not have maintained both. We may venture to question this; for we see the connecting link. His reason for denying certainty to the senses was somewhat similiar to that of Xenophanes, viz., their incapacity of distinguishing all the real objective elements of which things are made. Thus the eye discerns a complex mass which we call a flower; but that of which the flower is composed we see nothing. In other words the senses perceive *phenomena*, but do not, and cannot observe *noumena*,*—an anticipation of the greatest discovery of modern psychology, though seen dimly and confusedly by Anaxagoras. Perhaps the most convincing proof of his having so conceived knowledge, is in the passage quoted by Aristotle: "Things are to each according as they seem to him" (*ὅτι τοιαῦτα αὐτοῖς τὰ ὄντα, οἷα ἂν ἑπολάβωσι*). What is this but the assertion of all knowledge being confined to phenomena? It is further strengthened by the passage

* As this is the first time we have employed the uncouth but extremely useful word *noumena*, it may be necessary to explain the invariable meaning which will be attached to it in the course of these volumes. *Phenomenon* is pretty well understood; *noumenon* is the antithesis to it. The former means *Appearance*; the latter means the *Substratum*, or, to use the scholastic word, the *Substance*. (See the article 'Substance,' in the 'Penny Cyclopædia,' by the present writer.) Thus, as matter is recognised by us only in its manifestations (*phenomena*), we may still distinguish logically those manifestations from the thing manifested (*noumenon*). And the former will be the *materia circa quam*; the latter, the *materia in quâ*. *Noumenon* is therefore equivalent to the *Essence*; *phenomenon* to the *manifestation*.

in Sextus Empiricus, that "phenomena are the criteria of our knowledge of things beyond sense," i. e. things inevident are evident in phenomena (τῆς τῶν ἀδήλων καταλήψεως, τα φαινόμενα).

It must not, however, be concluded, from the above, that Anaxagoras regarded Sense as the sole origin of Knowledge. He held that the reason (λόγος) was the regulating faculty of the mind, as intelligence (νοῦς) was of the universe. The senses are accurate in their reports; but their reports are not accurate. They reflect objects; but they reflect them as these objects appear to them. Reason has to control their impressions. Reason has to verify their reports.

1 copies of
Things

Let us now apply this doctrine to the explanation of some of those, apparently, contradictory statements which have puzzled all the critics. For instance, he says that Snow is not white but black, because the water of which it is composed is black. Now, in this he could not have meant that snow did not *appear* to our senses white; his express doctrine of sense-knowledge forbids such an interpretation. But Reason told him that the Senses gave inaccurate reports; and, in this instance, reason showed him how their report was contradictory, since the Water was black, yet the Snow white. Here, then, is the whole theory of knowledge exemplified: Sense asserting that Snow is white; reflection asserting that Snow being made from black Water could not be white. He had another illustration. Take two liquids, white and black, and pour the one into the other drop by drop: the eye will be unable to discern the actual change as it is gradually going on; it will only discern it at certain marked intervals.

Thus did he separate himself at once from Xenophanes and Heraclitus. From the former, because admitting Sense to be the only criterion of things, the only source of knowledge, he could not regard the *λόγος* as the unfailing source of truth, but merely as the reflective power, whereby the reports of sense were controlled. From the latter, because reflection convinced him that the reports of the senses were *subjectively* true, but *objectively* false;* and Heraclitus maintained that the reports of the senses were alone certain. Both Xenophanes and Heraclitus had principles of absolute certitude; the one proclaimed Reason, the other Sense, to be that principle. Anaxagoras annihilated the former, by showing that the reason was dependent on the senses for materials; and he annihilated the other by showing that the materials were fallacious.

Having thus, not without considerable difficulty, brought his various opinions on human knowledge under one system, let us endeavour to do the same for his cosmology. And, as in the foregoing attempt, we have had to cut almost every inch of the way for ourselves, some tolerance may be demanded for the arbitrary use we have made of our tools (the interpretation of scattered passages); so,

* Subjective and objective are now so much used as almost to have become naturalized: it may not be superfluous, nevertheless, to explain them. The *subject* means 'the Mind of the Thinker' (*Ego*), the *object* means the 'Thing thought of' (*Non-Ego*). (See also, 'Penny Cyclop.,' art. *Subjective*, for a full explanation).

In the above passage "the reports of the senses being *subjectively* true" means that the senses truly inform us of their *impressions*; but these impressions are not at all like the actual *objects* (as may be shown by the *broken appearance* of a stick half of which is dipped in water), and therefore the reports are "*objectively* false."

in that to come, we may also feel it necessary to depart from the views of those whose authority we greatly respect; amongst others, Aristotle and Plato. In neither case do we feel at liberty to supply any passage: we take those that are extant, and interpret them as they seem to us to mean.

The ground-principle of his system is thus announced:—"Wrongly do the Greeks suppose that aught begins or ceases to be; for nothing comes into being or is destroyed; but all is an aggregation or secretion of pre-existent things: so that all-becoming might more correctly be called becoming-mixed, and all corruption becoming-separate." What is the thought here? That, instead of there being a creation, there was only an Arrangement; that, instead of one first element, there were an infinite number of elements. These elements are the celebrated *homœomeriæ*:

"Ex aurique putat micis consistere posse
Aurum, et de terris terram concresecere parvis;
Ignibus ex ignem, humorem ex humoribus esse;
Cætera consimili fingit ratione putatque."*

This singular opinion which maintains that flesh is made of molecules of elementary flesh, and bones of elementary bones, and so forth, is intelligible when we remember his theory of knowledge. The sense discerns elementary differences in matter, and reflection confirms the truth of this observation. If Nothing can proceed from Nothing, all things can be only an arrangement of existing things; but

* 'Lucretius,' i. 884-8.

"That gold from parts of the same nature rose,
That earths do earth, fires fire, airs air compose,
And so in all things else alike to those."—CREECH.

that in this Arrangement certain things should be discovered as radically distinguished from each other, gold from blood for example, can only lead to this dilemma,—either the distinction observed by the Senses is altogether false, or else the things distinguished must be elements. But the first horn of the dilemma is avoided by the sensuous nature of all knowledge; if the Senses deceive us in this respect, and the reason does not indicate the deception, then is knowledge all a delusion; therefore, unless we adopt scepticism, we must abide by the testimony of the Senses, as to the distinction of things. But, having granted the distinction, you must grant that the things distinguished are elements; if not, whence the distinction? Nothing can come of Nothing; blood can only become blood, gold can only become gold, mix them how you will; if blood can become bone, then does it become something out of nothing, for it was not bone before, and it is bone now. But, as blood can only be blood, and bone only be bone, whenever they are mingled it is a mingling of two elements, *homœomeriæ*. Thus would Anaxagoras reason.

In the beginning therefore there was the Infinite composed of *homœomeriæ*, or elementary seeds of infinite variety. So far from the All being The One, as Parmenides and Thales equally taught, Anaxagoras proclaimed the All to be The Many. But the mass of elements were as yet unmixed. What was to mix them? What power caused them to become arranged in one harmonious all-embracing system?

This question he answered by his famous Intelligence (*νοῦς*) the moving force of the Universe. He had on the one hand rejected Fate as

an empty name; on the other he rejected Chance as being no more than the Cause unperceived by human logic (τὴν τύχην, ἄδηλον αἰτιάν ἀνθρωπίνῃ λογισμῷ). This is another remarkable glimpse of what modern science was to establish. Having thus disclaimed these two powers, so potent in early speculation, Fate and Chance, he had no other course left than to proclaim Intelligence as the Arranging Power.*

This seems to us as, on the whole, the most remarkable speculation of all the pre-Socratic epoch; and indeed is so very near the scientific precision of modern times, that it is with difficulty we preserve its original simplicity. We will cite a portion of the fragment preserved by Simplicius, wherein Intelligence is spoken of: "Intelligence (νοῦς) is infinite, and autocratic; it is mixed up with nothing, but exists alone in and for itself. Were it otherwise, were it mixed up with anything, it would participate in the nature of all things: for in all there is a part of all; and so that which was mixed with intelligence would prevent it from exercising power over all things:" †—Here we have as distinct an expression as possible of the modern conception of the Deity acting through invariable laws, but in no way mixed up with the matter acted on.

Will not the foregoing remarks enable us to meet Aristotle's objection to Anaxagoras, that "he

* We have his own words reported by Diogenes, who says that his work opened thus: "Formerly all things were a confused mass; afterwards, Intelligence coming, arranged them into worlds."

† This passage so perfectly accords with what Aristotle says, 'De Animá,' i. 2, and 'Metaph.' i. 7, that we need only refer to them.

uses Intelligence as a machine,* in respect to the formation of the world; so that, when he is embarrassed how to explain the cause of this or that, he introduces Intelligence; but in all other things it is any cause but intelligence which produces things." Now, surely, this is a very unfair criticism, and could only be valid against a Malebranche, who saw God everywhere. Anaxagoras assigned to Intelligence the great Arrangement of the *homœomerie*; but of course supposed that subordinate arrangements were carried on by themselves. Let us take the case of the Christian Thinker some centuries back. His creed being that the Deity created and ordained all things; nevertheless, when he burnt his finger, the cause of the burn he attributed to fire, and not to God; but when the thunder muttered in the sky he attributed that to no cause but God. Is not this a parallel case with that of Anaxagoras? What he can explain he does explain by natural causes; whatever he is embarrassed to explain, whatever he does not understand, he attributes to God. Are these opinions contradictory?

It is here we see the force of Anaxagoras' opinion respecting Chance as an unascertained cause: wha.

* This is an allusion to the theatrical artifice of bringing down a God from Olympus, to solve the difficulty of the dénouement,—the *Deus ex machinâ* of Horace.

We make this remark to caution the reader against supposing that the objection is to a mechanical Intelligence. There is need of this caution; for the error has not unfrequently been adopted; and it is made a special charge in the latest German work, 'Zeller, Die Philos. der Griechen,' vol. i. p. 227:—"Die bekannten Klagen der Alten über den einseitig mechanischen Charakter seiner Lehre."—He then quotes Aristotle and Plato.

others called the effect of Chance he called the effect of the universal Intelligence.

On the same grounds we object to the reasoning of Plato. Those who have read the *Phædo*,—and who has not read it, in some shape or other, either in the forlorn splendour of Plato's diction, or in the dim and misty version of some translator?—those who have read the *Phædo*, we say, will doubtless remember the passage in which Socrates is made to express his poignant disappointment at the doctrine of Anaxagoras, to which he had at first been so attracted. This passage has the air of authenticity. It expresses a real disappointment, and the disappointment of Socrates, not merely of Plato. We believe firmly that Socrates is the speaker; and it is rare that we can say so of opinions promulgated by Plato under the august name of his master. But we believe also that Plato participated in it.

Here is the passage in the misty version of Thomas Taylor: we make no alterations, otherwise we should hold ourselves responsible for the whole, which we are disinclined to do.

“But, having once heard a person reading from a certain book, composed as he said by Anaxagoras, when he came to that part in which he says that intellect orders and is the cause of all things, I was delighted with this cause, and thought that in a certain respect it was an excellent thing for intellect to be the cause of all, and I considered if this was the case, disposing intellect would adorn all things, and place every thing in that situation in which it would subsist in the best manner. If any one, therefore, should be willing to discover the cause through which every thing is generated, or

corrupted, or is, he ought to discover how it may subsist in the best manner, or suffer, or perform any thing else. In consequence of this, therefore, it is proper that a man should consider nothing else, either about himself or about others, except that which is the most excellent, and the best: but it is necessary that he who knows this should also know that which is subordinate, since there is one and the same science of both. But, thus reasoning with myself I rejoiced, thinking that I had found a preceptor in Anaxagoras, who would instruct me in the causes of things agreeable to my own conceptions; and that he would inform me in the first place whether the earth is flat or round; and afterwards explain the cause of its being so; adducing for this purpose that which is better, and showing that it is better for the earth to exist in this manner. And if he should say that it is situated in the middle, that he would, besides this, show that it was better for it to be in the middle: and if he should render all this apparent to me, I was so disposed as not to require any other species of cause; for I by no means thought, after he had said that all these were orderly disposed by intellect, he would introduce any other cause for their subsistence, except that which shows that it is better for them to exist in this manner. Hence I thought that in rendering the cause common to each particular, and to all things, he would explain that which is best for each, and is the common good of all. And, indeed, I would not have exchanged these hopes for a mighty gain! But, having obtained his books with prodigious eagerness, I read them with great celerity, that I might with great celerity know that which is best and that which is base.

“ But from this admirable hope, my friend, I was forced away, when, in the course of my reading, I saw him make no use of intellect, nor employ certain causes for the purpose of orderly disposing particulars, but assign air, æther, and water, and many other things equally absurd, as the causes of things. And he appeared to me to be affected in a manner similar to him who should assert that all the actions of Socrates are produced by intellect; and, afterwards, endeavouring to relate the causes of each particular action, should say, that I now sit here because, in the first place, my body is composed of bones and nerves, and that the bones are solid and are separated by intervals from each other; but that the nerves, which are by nature capable of intension and remission, cover the bones, together with the skin in which they are contained. The bones, therefore, being suspended from their joints, the nerves, by straining and relaxing them, enable me to bend my limbs as at present; and through this cause I here sit in an inflected position. And, again, should assign other such like causes of my now conversing with you, viz., voice, and air, and hearing; and a thousand other particulars, neglecting the true cause, that, since it appeared to the Athenians better to condemn me on this account, it also appeared to me better and more just to sit here and, thus abiding, sustain the punishment which they have ordained me: for, otherwise, by the dog, as it appears to me, these bones and nerves would have been carried long ago either into Megara or Bœotia, through an opinion of that which is best, if I had not thought it more just and becoming to sustain the punishment ordered by my country, whatever it might be, than to withdraw

myself and run away. But to call things of this kind causes is extremely absurd. Indeed, if any one should say that, without possessing such things as bones and nerves, I could not act as I do, he would speak the truth; but, to assert that I act, as I do at present, through these, and that I operate with this intellect, and not from the choice of what is best, would be an assertion full of extreme negligence and sloth: for this would be the consequence of not being able to collect, by division, that the true cause of a thing is very different from that without which a cause would not be a cause."

Now, this reasoning we take to be an *ignoratio elenchi*. The illustration made use of is nothing to the purpose, and would be admitted by Anaxagoras as true, without in the least impugning his argument. Indeed, from what we can gather, we should say that Anaxagoras was not comprehended in ancient times, because his philosophy was, in certain respects, too much in advance of all ancient speculation. The disappointment of Socrates was natural. He expected to find a *moral theory of the universe*, and he found a *metaphysico-physical theory*.* He expected to find that, on the theory of an arranging Intelligence (by which he understood a human Intelligence idealized), the whole operations of nature could be established *à priori*; he found that this theory was only an enunciation of the fact of the operations of Nature being guided by fixed and immutable causes (which moderns call

* But Socrates himself is open to the same objection as that which he makes to Anaxagoras, since he says that God is not the author of all things, but only of those things that are good: *μη πάντων αἴτιον τὸν θεὸν ἀλλὰ τῶν ἀγαθῶν.*—*Repub.*, lib. ii. This also shows how exclusively his was a moral theory.

laws); and that these causes were neither the result of Necessity nor of Chance, but of Intelligence. Now, a theory more uncongenial to Socrates could scarcely be found; he therefore read it with haste and disappointment, and he read it with misunderstanding.

The Intelligence which Anaxagoras conceived was in no wise a moral Intelligence; it was simply the *primum mobile*, the all-knowing and motive force by which the arrangement of the elements was affected. Hence, from a passage in Aristotle, some have inferred that the *νοῦς* was only a physical principle, whose sole office was to set matter in motion. This is an error easy of explanation. Men are still so accustomed to conceive the divine Intelligence as only a more perfect and exalted human Intelligence, that where they see no traces of the latter they are prone to question the existence of the former. When Anaxagoras says that *Nous* was the creative principle, men instantly figure to themselves a *Nous* similar to their own. On examination, they find that such an intelligence as they conceive has no place in the doctrine. They then declare that no Intelligence has any place there. It is a mere name. It means no more than Motion, and might have been called Motion.

But, fortunately, Simplicius has preserved a long passage from the work of Anaxagoras: we have quoted a portion of it before, and shall now select one or two sentences in which the *Nous*, as a cognitive power, is distinctly set forth; and we quote these the more readily as Ritter, to whom we are indebted for the passage, has not translated them:—
 “Intelligence is, of all things, the subtlest and

purest, and has entire knowledge of all. Everything which has a soul, whether great or small, is governed by the Intelligence (*νοῦς κρατεῖ*). Intelligence knows all things (*πάντα ἔγνω νοῦς*), both those that are mixed and those that are separated; and the things which ought to be, and the things which were, and those which now are, and those which will be; all are arranged by Intelligence (*πάντα διεκόσμησε νοῦς**).” Here, the creative, or rather disposing, faculty is not more distinctly expressed than the cognitive. The *Nous* both *knows* and *acts*; this is its duplicate existence. A grand conception; one that in ancient speculation was seldom rivalled; one that was so far in advance of its chronological epoch, as to be a puzzle to all critics.

The relation in which the system of Anaxagoras stands to those of others may be briefly characterized. The Infinite Matter of the Ionians became in his hands the *homœomeriæ*. Instead of One substance, such as Water, Air, or Fire, he saw the necessity of admitting Many substances. At the same time, he carried out the Pythagorean and Eleatic principle of The One; thus avoiding the dialectical thrusts of Zeno against the upholders of The Many. Hegel and M. Cousin would call this eclecticism, and, in one sense, they would be correct; but, inasmuch as Anaxagoras was led to his doctrine by the development which the Ionian and the Eleatic principles had taken, and was not led to

* It would be needless, after this, to refer to the numerous expressions of Aristotle, in confirmation. The critical reader will do well to consult ‘Trendelenburg, Comment. Aristot. de Anim.,’ p. 466 *et seq.* Plato, in speaking of the *σῶψ*, adds *καὶ ψυχῆ*.—*Craty.*, p. 400.

it by any eclectic method, we must protest against the application of such a name. There was a truth dimly recognised by the Ionians, namely, that the material phenomena are all reducible to some noumenon or noumena, some ἀρχή. What that Beginning was, they variously sought. Anaxagoras also sought it; but his doctrine of perception convinced him that it could not be one principle, but many: hence his *homœomeriæ*. So far he was an Ionian. But there was also a truth dimly seen by the Eleatics, namely, that The Many could never be resolved into One; and, as without One there could not be Many, and with the Many only there could not be One; in other words, as God must be The One from whom the multiplicity of things is derived, the necessity of admitting The One as The All and the Self-existent was proved. This reasoning was accepted by Anaxagoras. He saw that there were Many things; he saw also the necessity for The One. In so far he was an Eleatic.

Up to this point the two doctrines had been at variance; a chasm of infinite depth yawned between them. Zeno's invention of Dialectics was a result of this profound difference. It was reserved for Anaxagoras to bridge over the chasm which could not be filled up. He did so with consummate skill. He accepted both doctrines, with some modifications, and proclaimed the existence of the Infinite Intelligence (The One) who was the Architect of the Infinite Matter (*homœomeriæ*, the Many). By this means he escaped each horn of the dilemma; he escaped that which gored the Ionians, namely, as to *how* and *why* the Infinite Matter became fashioned into worlds and beings; since Matter by itself can only be Matter. He escaped that horn

which gored the Eleatics, as to *how* and *why* the Infinite One, who was pure and unmixed, became the Infinite Many, impure and mixed; since one thing could never be more than one thing: it must have some other thing on which to act; for it cannot act upon itself. Anaxagoras escaped both these horns, by his dualistic theory of Mind fashioning, and Matter fashioned.

A similar bridge was thrown by him over the deep chasm separating the Sensualists from the Rationalists, with respect to the origin of knowledge. He admitted both Sense *and* Reason; others had only admitted either Sense *or* Reason.

These two points entitle Anaxagoras to a very high rank in the history of Philosophy; and we regret to see that Aristotle uniformly speaks disparagingly of him, but believe that the great Stagyr-ite did not clearly apprehend the force of the doctrine he was combating.

CHAPTER III.

EMPEDOCLES.

WE are forced to differ from all historians we have consulted, except De Gerando, who hesitates about the matter, respecting the place occupied by Empedocles. Brucker classes him among the Pythagoreans; Ritter amongst the Eleatics; Zeller and Hegel as the precursor of the Atomists, who precede Anaxagoras; Renouvier as the precursor of Anaxagoras; Tenneman placing Diogenes of Apollonia, between Anaxagoras and Empedocles, but making Democritus precede them. Whence these differences? Because a just historical method was wanting to all. Chronology supports our view; but our method originated it. When we come to treat of the doctrines of Empedocles, we shall endeavour to show the filiation of ideas from Anaxagoras. Meanwhile it may be necessary to examine the passage in Aristotle, on which very contradictory opinions have been grounded

In the 3rd chapter of the 1st book of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, after a paragraph on the system of Empedocles, occurs this passage: "But Anaxagoras, of Clazomenæ, being superior to him (Empedocles) in respect of age, but inferior to him in respect of opinions, said that the number of principles, was infinite." By "*superior*" and "*inferior*" we preserve the antithesis of the original; but it would be more intelligible to say, "*older*" and "*inferior*."

There are two other interpretations of this passage. One of them is that of M. Cousin (after Hegel), who believed that the antithesis of Aristotle is meant to convey the fact of Anaxagoras, although older in point of time, being more recent in point of published doctrine than Empedocles, having written after him. This is his translation : ‘Anaxagoras qui naquit avant ce dernier, mais qui écrivit après lui.’

The second is that adopted by M. Renouvier from M. Ravaisson, who interprets it as meaning that the doctrine of Anaxagoras, though more ancient in point of publication, is more recent in point of thought, *i. e.*, more developed philosophically although historically earlier.

Now, we believe both these interpretations to be erroneous. There is no ground for them except in the antithesis of Aristotle ; and the real meaning of that antithesis we will examine in the Appendix,* the present not being the place for such critical inquiries. Chronology is on our side. Anaxagoras was born about the 70th Olympiad ; Empedocles, by general consent, is said to have flourished in the 84th Olympiad ; this would make Anaxagoras at least 64 years old at the time when Empedocles published his doctrine, after which age it is barely probable that Anaxagoras could have written ; and even this probability vanishes when we look back upon the life of Anaxagoras, who was teaching in Athens about the 76th or 77th Olympiad, and who died at Lampsacus, in exile, in the 88th Olympiad, *viz.*, 16 years after the epoch at which Empedocles is said to have flourished.

Trusting that the above point was not unworthy

* See ‘Appendix C.’

of brief discussion, we will now commence our narrative.

Empedocles was born in Agrigentum, in Sicily, and flourished about the 84th Olympiad. Agrigentum was at that period in the height of its splendour, and a formidable rival to Syracuse. Empedocles, descended from a wealthy and illustrious family, acquired a high reputation by his resolute espousal of the democratic party. Much of his wealth is said to have been spent in a singular but honourable manner; namely, in bestowing dowries on poor girls, and marrying them to young men of rank and consequence. Like all the early philosophers, he is supposed to have been a great traveller, and to have gathered in distant lands the wondrous store of knowledge which he displayed. Only in the far East could he have learned the potent secrets of Medicine and Magic. Only from the Egyptian Magi could he have learned the art of prophecy.

It is probable, however, that he did travel into Italy and to Athens. But, in truth, we can mention little of his personal history that is not open to question. His name rivals that of Pythagoras in the regions of Fable. The same august majesty of demeanour, and the same marvellous power over nature, are attributed to both. Miracles were his pastimes. In prophesying, in medicine, in power over the winds and rains, his wonders were so numerous and so renowned, that when he appeared at the Olympic Games all eyes were reverentially fixed upon him. His dress and demeanour accorded with his reputation. Haughty, impassioned, and eminently disinterested in character, he refused the tyranny of Agrigentum when freely offered him by

the citizens ; but his love of distinction showed itself in priestly garments, a golden girdle, the Delphic crown, and a numerous train of attendants. He proclaimed himself to be a God whom men and women reverently adored. But we must not take this literally. He probably only "assumed by anticipation an honour which he promised all sooth-sayers, priests, physicians and princes of the people."

Fable has also taken advantage of the mystery which overhangs his death, to create out of it various stories of marvel. One relates, that, after a sacred festival, he was drawn up to heaven in a splendour of celestial effulgence. Another and more popular one is that he threw himself headlong into the crater of Mount Ætna, in order that he might pass for a god, the cause of his death being unknown ; but one of his brazen sandals, thrown out in an eruption, revealed the secret.

A similar uncertainty exists as to his Teachers and his Writings. Pythagoras, Parmenides, Xenophanes, and Anaxagoras have all been positively named as his Teachers. Unless we understand the word Teachers in a figurative sense, we must absolutely reject these statements. Diogenes Laertius, who reports them, does so in his dullest manner, with an absence of criticism, remarkable even in him.* Considering that there was, at least, one hundred and forty years between Pythagoras and Empedocles, we need no further argument to disprove any connexion between them.

Diogenes, on the authority of Aristotle (as he says), attributes to Empedocles the invention of

* Diogenes is one of the stupidest of the stupid race of compilers. His work is useful as containing occasional extracts, but can rarely be relied on for anything else.

Rhetoric ; and Quintilian (iii. c. 1) has repeated the statement. We have no longer the work of Aristotle ; but, as Ritter says, the assertion must have arisen from a misunderstanding, or have been said in jest by Aristotle, because Empedocles was the teacher of Gorgias : most likely from a misunderstanding, since Sextus Empiricus mentions Aristotle as having said that Empedocles first *incited*, or *gave an impulse* to Rhetoric (πρῶτον κενηκέναι.—*Adv. Mat.* vii.) Aristotle, in his ‘Rhetoric,’ says that Corax and Tisias were the first to publish a written Treatise on Eloquence. We feel the less hesitation in rejecting the statement of Diogenes, because in the very passage which succeeds he is guilty of a very gross misquotation of Aristotle, who, as he says, “In his book of ‘the Poets’ speaks of Empedocles as Homeric, powerful in his eloquence, rich in metaphors, and other poetical figures.”—*Diog.* viii. c. ii. § 3, p. 57. Now, this work of Aristotle, on the Poets, is fortunately extant ; and it proclaims the very reverse of what Diogenes alleges. Here is the passage:—“Custom, indeed, connecting the *poetry* or *making* with the *metre*, has denominated some elegiac poets, others epic poets : thus distinguishing poets not according to the nature of their imitation, but according to that of their metre only ; for even they who composed treatises of *Medicine*, or *Natural Philosophy* in verse, are denominated *Poets* : yet *Homer* and *Empedocles* have *nothing in common except their metre* ; the former, therefore, justly merits the name of *Poet* ; the other should rather be called a *Physiologist* than a *Poet*.”—*De Poet.*, c. i.

After this, and indeed on the strength of this

very passage, we may reasonably accept the suspicion of critics, that the tragedies attributed to Empedocles were not the works of the philosopher.

The diversity of opinion with respect to the position of Empedocles, indicated at the opening of this chapter, is not without significance. That men such as Hegel, Ritter, Zeller, and Tenneman should see strong reasons for different classification cannot be without importance to the Historian. They destroy each other; but it does not, therefore, follow that they all build upon false grounds. Each of their views has a certain truth in it; but, not being the whole truth, it cannot prevail. The cause of the difference seems to be this: Empedocles has something of the Pythagorean, Eleatic, Heraclitic, and Anaxagorean systems in his system; so that each historian, detecting one of these elements, and omitting to give due importance to the others, has connected Empedocles with the system to which that one element belongs. Ritter and Zeller have, however, been aware of some of the complex relations of the doctrine, but failed, we think, in giving it its true position.

Respecting human knowledge, Empedocles belongs partly to the Eleatics. With them, he complained of the imperfection of the Senses; and looked for truth only in Reason, which is partly human and partly divine—in other words, partly clouded by the senses. The divine knowledge is opposed to the sensuous knowledge; for man cannot approach the divine, neither can he seize it with the hand nor the eye. Hence Empedocles conjoined the duty of contemplating God in the mind. But he appears to have proclaimed the existence of this divine knowledge without attempting to deter-

mine its relation to human knowledge. In this respect he resembles rather Xenophanes than Parmenides.*

We have no clear testimony of his having studied the works of Anaxagoras; but, if we had, it might not be difficult to explain his inferior theory of knowledge; for, in truth, the theory of Anaxagoras was too far in advance of the age to be rightly apprehended. Empedocles, therefore, adhered to the Eleatic theory. With Xenophanes, he bewailed the delusion of the senses and experience. Listen to his lament:—

“Swift-fated and conscious, how brief is life’s pleasureless
portion!
Like the wind-driven smoke, they are carried backwards and
forwards,
Each trusting to nought save what his experience vouches,
On all sides distracted; yet wishing to find out the whole
truth,
In vain; neither by eye nor ear perceptible to man,
Nor to be grasped by mind: and thou, when thus thou hast
wandered,
Wilt find that no further reaches the knowledge of mortals.”

These verses seem to indicate a scepticism of Reason as well as of the Senses; but other passages show that he upheld the integrity of Reason, which he thought was only prevented from revealing the whole truth because it was imprisoned in the body. Mundane existence was, in his system, the doom of such immortal souls as had been disgraced from Heaven. The Fall of Man he thus distinctly enunciated:—

* Having quoted (p. 92) Aristotle’s testimony of the sensuous nature of knowledge in the Empedoclean theory, we need only here refer to it; adding that in this respect he ranks with Parmenides rather than Xenophanes.

"This is the law of Fate, of the Gods an olden enactment,
If with guilt or murder a Dæmon* pollteth his members,
Thrice ten thousand years must he wander apart from the
blessed.

Hence, doomed I stray, a fugitive from Gods and an outcast
To raging strife submissive."

But he had some more philosophical ground to go upon when he wished to prove the existence of Reason and of the Divine Nature. He maintained that like could only be known by like: through earth we learn the earth, through fire we learn fire, through strife we learn strife, and through love we learn love. If, therefore, † like could only be known by like, the Divine could only be known by Divine Reason; and, inasmuch as the Divine is recognised by man, it is a proof that the Divine exists. Knowledge and Existence mutually imply each other.

Empedocles resembles Xenophanes also in his attacks on anthromorphism. God, he says, has neither head adjusted to limbs like human beings, nor legs, nor hands:

"He is, wholly and perfectly, mind ineffable, holy,
With rapid and swift-glancing thought pervading the whole
world."

We may compare these verses with the line of Xenophanes—

"Without labour he ruleth all things by reason and insight."

Thus far Empedocles belonged to the Eleatics. The traces of Pythagoras are fewer; for we cannot

* An immortal soul.

† We are here thinking for Empedocles; that is, we have no other authority for this statement, than that something of the kind is wanting to make out a plausible explanation of what is only implied in the fragments extant. The fragments tell us that he believed in Reason as the transcendent faculty; and also that Reason did in some way recognise the Divine. All we have done is to supply the link wanting.

regard as such all those analogies which the ingenuity of some critics has detected.* In his life, and in his moral precepts, there is a strong resemblance to Pythagoras; but in his philosophy we see none beyond metempsychosis, and the consequent abstinence from animal food.

Heraclitus had said there was nothing but a perpetual flux of things, that the whole world of phenomena was as a flowing river, ever-changing yet apparently the same. Anaxagoras had also said that there was no creation of elements, but only an arrangement. Empedocles was now to amalgamate these views. "Fools!" he exclaims,

"Who think aught can begin to be which formerly was not,
Or, that aught which is, can perish and utterly decay.†
Another truth I now unfold: no natural birth
Is there of mortal things, nor death's destruction final;
Nothing is there but a mingling, and then a separation of the
mingled,
Which are called a birth and death by ignorant mortals.‡"

So distinct a relationship as these verses manifest towards both Heraclitus and Anaxagoras will account for the classification adopted by Hegel, Zeller, and Renouvier; at the same time, it gives greater strength to our opinion of Empedocles as the successor of these two.

The differences are, however, as great as the resemblances. Having asserted that all things were but a mingling and a separation, he must have ad-

* See them noticed in 'Zeller, Philos. der Griechen,' p. 169-173.

† Compare Anaxagoras, as quoted, p. 120: "Wrongly do the Greeks suppose that aught begins or ceases to be."

‡ Compare Anaxagoras: "So that all-becoming might more properly be called becoming mixed, and all-corruption becoming separate."

mitted the existence of certain primary elements which were the materials mingled.

Heraclitus had affirmed Fire to be both the principle and the element; both the moving, mingling force, and the mingled matter. Anaxagoras, with great logical consistency, affirmed that the primary elements were *homœomeriæ*, since nothing could proceed from nothing, and whatever was arranged must, therefore, be an arrangement of primary elements. Empedocles affirmed that the primary elements were Four, viz., Earth, Air, Fire, and Water: out of these all other things proceed; all things are but the various minglings of these four.

Now, that this is an advance on both the preceding conceptions will scarcely be denied; it bears indubitable evidence of being a later conception, and a modification of its antecedents. Nevertheless, although superior as a physiological view, it has not the logical consistency of that maintained by Anaxagoras; for, as Empedocles taught that like can only be known by like, *i. e.*, that existence and knowledge were identical and mutually implicative, he ought to have maintained that whatever is recognised by the mind as distinct, must be distinct *in esse*.

With respect to the Formative Power, we see the traces of Heraclitus and Anaxagoras in about the same proportion. Heraclitus maintained that Fire was impelled by *irresistible Desire to transform itself* into some determinate existence. Anaxagoras maintained that the infinite Intelligence was the great Architect who arranged all the material elements; the Mind that controlled and fashioned Matter. The great distinction between these two systems is, that the Fire transforms itself, the *Nous*

transforms something which is radically different from itself. Both these conceptions were amalgamated by Empedocles. He taught that Love was the creative power. Wherever there is a mixture of different elements Love is exerted.

Here we see the Desire of Heraclitus sublimed into its highest expression, and the *Nous* of Anaxagoras reduced to its moral expression, Love. The difficulties of the Heraclitean doctrine, namely, as to how Fire can ever become anything *different* from Fire, are avoided by the adoption of the Anaxagorean dualism; while the difficulties of the Anaxagorean doctrine, namely, as to how the great Arranger was moved and incited to arrange the primary elements, are in some measure avoided by the natural desire of Love (Aphrodite).

But there was a difficulty still to be overcome. If Love was the creator, that is, the Mingler, what caused separation? To explain this, he had recourse to Hate. As the perfect state of supra-mundane existence was Harmony, the imperfect state of mundane existence was Discord. Love was, therefore, the Formative Principle, and Hate the Destructive. Hence he said that,

“All the members of God war together, one after the other.” This is but the phrase of Heraclitus: “Strife is the parent of all things.” It is, nevertheless, most probable that Empedocles regarded Hate as only a mundane power, as only operating on the theatre of the world, and nowise disturbing the abode of the Gods.* For, inasmuch as Man is a fallen and perverted God, doomed to wander on the face of the earth, sky-aspiring, but

* An opinion subsequently put forth with great splendour of diction by Plato in the ‘Phædrus.’

sense-clouded ; so may Hate be only perverted Love, struggling through space. Does not this idea accord with what we know of his opinions? His conception of God, that is, of The One, was that of a "sphere in the bosom of harmony fixed, in calm rest, gladly rejoicing." This quiescent sphere, which is Love, exists above and around the moved World. Certain points are loosened from the combination of the elements, but the unity established by Love continues. Ritter is convinced that Hate has only power over the smaller portion of existence, over that part which, disconnecting itself from the whole, contaminates itself with crime, and thereby devolves to the errors of mortals.

Our account of Empedocles will be found to vary considerably from that in Aristotle ; but our excuse is that furnished by the great Stagyrite himself, who is constantly telling us that Empedocles gave no reasons for his opinions. This is true. Moreover, Aristotle makes us aware that his interpretation is open to question ; for, he says, that this interpretation can only be obtained by pushing Empedocles' premisses to their legitimate conclusions ; a process which destroys all historical integrity : for what thinker *does* push his premisses to their utmost limits? Empedocles was an original thinker ; but he was certainly not a logical thinker, and we have no right to supply his deficiencies in that respect.

The last sentence will, perhaps, be thought subversive of our avowed plan of supplying the connecting links in a chain of reasoning which tradition hands down to us in fragments. But, in truth, our endeavour has been to connect two or more fragments, not to lengthen the original chain. For

instance, at page 139, we take an admitted doctrine of perception, and an admitted doctrine of the existence of the Divine, we bring the two together by means of a syllogism ; but we add nothing in the shape of doctrine.

CHAPTER IV.

DEMOCRITUS.

THE laughing Philosopher, the traditional antithesis to Heraclitus, was born at Abdera (the new settlement of the Teians after their abandonment of Ionia), in the 80th Olymp. His claim to the title of Laugher, *ὁ γελασῖνος* has been disputed, and by moderns generally rejected. Perhaps, the native stupidity of his countrymen,—and they were renowned for abusing the privilege which men have of being stupid,—afforded him incessant matter for laughter. Perhaps he was by nature satirical, and thought ridicule the test of truth. We have no proof of his being a satirist, except the tradition: that may be false, but must have had some origin.

Democritus was of a noble and wealthy family, so wealthy that it entertained Xerxes at Abdera on his return from Asia. Xerxes in recompense left some of his Magi to instruct the young Democritus. Doubtless it was their tales of the wonders of their native land, and of the deep unspeakable wisdom of their priests, that inspired him with the passion of travel. "I, of all men," he says, "of my day, have travelled over the greatest extent of country, exploring the most distant lands; most climates and regions have I visited, and listened to the most experienced and wisest of men; and, in the calculations of line-measuring no one hath surpassed me, not even the Egyptians, amongst whom I so-

journed five years." In travel he spent his patrimony ; but he exchanged it for an amount of knowledge which no one had previously equalled. The Abderites, on his return, looked on him with vague wonder. The sun-burnt traveller brought with him knowledge which, to them, must have appeared divine. Curiosity encompassed him. He exhibited a few samples of his lore, foretold unexpected changes in the weather, and was at once exalted to the summit of that power to which it is a nation's pride to bow. He was offered political supremacy, but wisely declined it.

It would be idle to detail here the various anecdotes which tradition hands down respecting him. They are mostly either impossible or improbable. That, for instance, of his having put out his eyes with a burning-glass, in order that he might be more perfectly and undisturbedly acquainted with his reason, is in violent contradiction to his very theory of the soul, to which the eye was one of the great inlets. We may credit the account of his having led a quiet sober life, and of his dying at a very advanced age. More we cannot credit.

Respecting his Philosophy we have more certain evidence ; but even that has been so variously interpreted, and is in many parts so obscure, that historians have been at a loss to give it its due position in relation to other systems. Reinhold, Brandis, Marbach, and Hermann view him as an Ionian ; Buhle and Tennemann, as an Eleatic ; Hegel, as the successor of Heraclitus, and the predecessor of Anaxagoras ; Ritter, as a Sophist ; and Zeller, as the precursor of Anaxagoras. Of all these attempts at classification, that by Ritter is the worst : it is pitiable. Because Democritus has an

occasional phrase implying great vanity—and those mentioned by Ritter seem to us to imply nothing of the kind—he is a Sophist. That is a sample of Ritter's arguing!

We are convinced that all the above attempts are erroneous, and for a similar reason to that which guided historians in their classification of Empedocles. Democritus is distinguished from the Ionians, by the denial of all sensible *quality* to the primary elements; from the Eleatics by his affirmation of the existence of a multiplicity of elements; from Heraclitus on the same ground; from Anaxagoras, as we shall see presently; and from Empedocles, by denying the Four Elements, and the Formative Love. All these differences are radical. The resemblances, such as they are, may have been coincidences, or derived from one or two of the later thinkers: Parmenides and Anaxagoras for example.

What did Democritus teach? This question we will endeavour to answer somewhat differently from historians; but our answer shall be wholly grounded on precise and certain evidence, with no other originality than that of developing the system from its central principles.

We commence with Knowledge; and with the passage of Aristotle, universally accredited though variously employed: "Democritus says, that nothing is true; or, if so, it is not evident to us. Nevertheless, as, in his system, the sensation constitutes the thought, and at the same time is but a change in the sentient being, the sensible phænomena (i. e. *sensations*) are of necessity true."*

* We feel bound to quote the original: ἄτοι οὐθεν εἶλαι ἀληθες ἢ ἡμῖν γ' ἄδηλον. "Ὅλως δὲ διὰ τὸ ὑπολαμβάνειν, φρόνησιν μὲν

What does this pregnant passage mean? It means that sensation, inasmuch as it is sensation, must be true: that is true *subjectively*; but sensation, inasmuch as it is sensation, cannot be true *objectively*. M. Renouvier thinks that Democritus was the first to introduce this distinction; but our readers will remember that it was the distinction established by Anaxagoras. Sextus Empiricus quotes the very words of Democritus: "The sweet exists only *in form*, the bitter *in form*, the hot *in form*, the cold *in form*, colour *in form*; but in *causal reality* (αἰτιῇ)* only atoms and space exist. The sensible things which are supposed by opinion to exist have no real existence, but only atoms and space exist."—*Adv. Mathem.* vii. p. 163. When he says that colour, &c., exist *in form* only, he means that they are sensible images constantly emanating from things; a notion we shall explain presently. A little further on Sextus reports the opinion, that we only perceive that *which falls in upon us* according to the disposition of our bodies; all else is hidden from us.

Neither Condillac nor Destutt de Tracy have more distinctly identified sensation and thought, than Democritus in the above passages. But he does so in the spirit of Kant rather than that of Condillac; for, although with the latter he would say, "Penser c'est sentir," yet would he with the former draw the distinction between phenomenal and noumenal perception.

But did sensation constitute all knowledge?

τὴν αἴσθησιν, ταύτην δ' εἶναι ἀλλοίωσιν, τὸ φαινόμενον κατὰ τὴν αἴσθησιν, ἔξ ἀνάγκης ἀληθὲς εἶναι.—*Met.*, iv. 5.

* Modern editors read ἐτιῇ, "in reality." We are inclined, however, to preserve the old reading, as more antithetical to νομῆ.

Was there nothing to guide man but the reports of his senses? Yes: there was *Reflection*.*

This Reflection, as with Anaxagoras, was not the source of absolute truth, but fulfilled a *controlling* office, and established certitude, as far as there could be certitude in human knowledge. And he proved the existence of this Reflection, very much in the style of the celebrated addition to the aphorism, "Nothing is in the Mind which was not previously in the Senses;" to which Leibnitz added, "except the Mind itself." Democritus, aware that most of our conceptions are derived through the senses, was also aware that many of them were utterly independent of, and in defiance to the senses. Thus the "infinitely small" and the "infinitely great" escape sense, but are affirmed by Reflection. So also the *atoms* which his Reason told him were the primary elements of things, he could never have known by sense.

Thus far we have seen Democritus only as the inheritor of Anaxagoras; but, as the epoch we are now considering was distinguished by the greater attention bestowed on the origin of knowledge, we may reasonably expect that Democritus had devoted considerable thought on the subject, and had originated some view of his own.

He was not content with the theory of Anaxagoras. There were difficulties which remained unsolved by it; which, indeed, had never been appreciated. This was the grand problem Democritus set himself to solve: *How do we perceive external things?* It is no answer to say that we perceive them by the senses. This is no better

* *διάνοια*: etymology, no less than psychology, seems to support our translation.

an explanation than that of the occult quality of opium, given by Molière's physician: "L'opium endormit parcequ'il a une vertu soporifique." *How is it that the senses perceive?*

No one had asked this question; to have asked it, was to form an era in the history of philosophy. Men began by reasoning on the reports of the senses, unsuspecting of any error. If they saw anything, they concluded that what they saw existed, and existed *as* they saw it. Then came others who began to question the accuracy of the senses; lastly came those who denied that accuracy altogether, and pronounced the reports to be mere delusions. Thus the question forced itself on the mind of Democritus:—In what manner could the senses perceive external things? Once settle the *modus operandi*, and then the real efficacy may be estimated.

The hypothesis by which he attempted to explain perception was both ingenious and bold; and many centuries elapsed before a better one was suggested. He supposed that all things were constantly throwing off images of themselves (*εἰδωλα*), which, after assimilating to themselves the surrounding air, enter the soul by the pores of the sensitive organ. The eye, for example, is composed of aqueous humours; and water sees. But how does water see? It is diaphanous and receives the image of whatever is presented to it. This is a very rude and material hypothesis, we will confess; but did not philosophers, for centuries, believe that their senses received *impressions* of things? and did they not suppose that they had *images* of things reflected in the mind? Now this latter hypothesis is, perhaps, less obviously fantastic and gratuitous;

but it is also less logical; for, if the mind be a mirror reflecting the images of things, how comes it that the images vary with different minds, and with the same mind at different states? And how is it that we never know the nature of things, but only their appearances? But, more than all, how is it that the mind becomes a mirror reflecting the images? The hypothesis stands as much in need of explanation as the phenomenon it pretends to explain.

The hypothesis of Democritus once admitted serves its purpose; at least, to a considerable extent. Only the external surface of a body is thrown off in the shape of an εἶδωλον or *image*, and even that only imperfectly and obscurely. The figure thrown off is not a perfect image of the object throwing it off. It is only an image of the external form, and is subject to variations in its passage to the mind. This being the case, the strictly *phenomenal* nature of all knowledge is accurately exhibited. The idols or images, being themselves imperfect, our knowledge is imperfect.

With this theory of knowledge how could he exhibit the other, greater, question of Creation? We shall see. It is said, that he rejected The One of the Eleatics, The Four of Empedocles, and the *Homœomeriæ* of Anaxagoras, and declared *Atoms* invisible and intangible to be the primary elements; and that all things were but modes of one of the triple arrangements, viz., *configuration*, *combination*, and *position*. The atom being indivisible is necessarily *one*; and, being one, is necessarily self-existent. By this hypothesis, therefore, Democritus satisfied the demands of those who declared that the self-existent must be One; and of

those who declared that there were many things existing, and that the One could never be more than the One, never become the Many. He amalgamated the Ionian and Eleatic schools in his speculation, correcting both. He, doubtless, derived this idea from the *homœomeriæ* of Anaxagoras; or, as those who place Anaxagoras later than Democritus would say, originated this idea. It becomes a question, therefore, as to which of these speculations bears the impress of greater maturity. On this question we cannot hesitate to pronounce. The idea of *homœomeriæ* betrays its more primitive nature in this: it attributes *positive* qualities to atoms, which qualities are not changed or affected by combination or arrangement. The idea of the *atom* divested of all quality, and only assuming that quality as phenomenal, when in combination with other atoms, and changing its quality with every change of combination, is indubitably a far more scientific speculation; it is also obviously later in point of development.

From the axiom that only "like can act upon like," Anaxagoras formed his *homœomeriæ*. Democritus accepted the axiom, but gave it a wider application. If only like can act upon like, said he, then must all things be alike *in esse*; and the only differences are those of phenomena, *i. e.*, of manifestation; these depend on combination and arrangement.

Atomism is homœomerianism stripped of qualities. It is, therefore, Anaxagoras greatly improved.

The Atomism of Democritus has not been sufficiently appreciated as a speculation. To us it appears one of the profoundest yet reached by

human subtlety. Some proof of this may be seen in the fact of the great Leibnitz, many centuries afterwards, having been led to a doctrine essentially similar. His celebrated "Monadologie" is but Atomism, with a new terminology. Leibnitz called his Monad a *force*; and that to him was the *prima materia*. So also Democritus denied that atoms had any weight; they had only force, and it was the impulsion given by superior force which constituted weight. It is worthy of remark, that not only did these thinkers concur in their doctrine of atomism, but also, as we have seen, in their doctrine of the origin of knowledge, a coincidence which gives weight to the supposition that in both minds one doctrine was dependent on the other.

From what has already been said, the reader may estimate Ritter's assertion, that it would be in vain to seek for any profounder view in the theory of Democritus ~~than~~ that common to all mechanical physiologists who sought to reduce everything to mathematical conceptions; an assertion as preposterous as that which follows it, namely, that Democritus arrived at his atomic theory in the same way as modern physiologists,—from a bias for the mechanical consideration of Nature. He here grossly contradicts himself. Having first declared that there was nothing in the Democritian theory but what the Ionians had previously discovered, he next declares that this theory is the same as that of the modern atomic theory. We are puzzled to which opinion we shall award the palm of historical misconception. The modern atomic theory is the *law of definite proportions*; the ancient theory is merely the *affirmation of indefinite combinations*. Between the two there is precisely the difference of

than

Positive Science and Philosophy.* They were neither arrived at in the same way, nor have they the same signification.

Ritter's chapter on Democritus is one of the worst in his book. He has misrepresented almost every point, and even failed, we believe, to seize the meaning of the very texts he quotes. For instance, he says, "Only one physical property was attributed to these atoms—weight." This is in defiance of authority, † and the very passage from Aristotle which is quoted to maintain it, is, we believe, against it. The passage is this: "Atoms, indeed, are heavy according to excess" (*κατὰ τὴν ὑπεροχὴν.*) Excess of what? Clearly excess of aggregation, *i. e.*, of force. But if only heavy *in excess*, they cannot individually be heavy; *ergo*, weight is not a property of each atom, but of a combination of atoms.

We can enter into no further details. Attempts have been made, from certain expressions attributed to Democritus, to deduce an Intelligence, somewhat similar to that in the Anaxagorean doctrine, as the Formative Principle. We cannot see our way on this path. Evidence is so small and so questionable, that we refrain from pronouncing on it. Certain it is that he attributed the formation of things to Destiny; but whether that Destiny was intelligent or not is uncertain.

In conclusion, we may observe that his system was an advance on that of his predecessors. In the two great points of psychology and physics, which we have considered at length, it is impossible to mistake a very decided progress, as well as the opening of a new line in each department.

* See our 'Introduction.' † See 'Renouvier,' i. 245, 6.

THIRD EPOCH.

INTELLECTUAL CRISIS.—THE INSUFFICIENCY OF
ALL ATTEMPTS TOWARDS A SOLUTION OF THE
PROBLEM OF EXISTENCE, AS WELL AS THAT OF
KNOWLEDGE, PRODUCES

THE SOPHISTS.

THIRD EPOCH.

THE SOPHISTS.

THE Sophists are a much calumniated race. That they should have been so formerly does not surprise us ; that they should be so still is an evidence that historical criticism is yet in its infancy. In raising our voices to defend them, we are aware that we shall incur the charge of paradox. But, looked at nearly, the paradox is on the side of those who credit and repeat the traditional account. In truth we know of no charge so unanimous, yet so paradoxical, as that brought against the Sophists. It is as if mankind had consented to judge of Socrates by the representation of him in "the Clouds." The caricature of Socrates by Aristophanes is quite as near the truth as the caricature of the Sophists by Plato ;* with this difference, that the one was wilfully, consciously caricaturing, the other unconsciously.

On the Sophists we have only the testimony of antagonists ; and the history of mankind clearly proves that the enmities which arise from difference of race and country are feeble, compared with the enmities which arise from difference of creed : the former may be lessened by contact and intercourse, the latter only aggravated. Plato had every reason to dislike the Sophists and their opinions : he,

* See in particular that amusing dialogue the 'Euthydemus,' which is quite as exaggerated as Aristophanes.

therefore, lost no occasion of slandering the one, and misrepresenting the other. Yet from Plato alone do writers draw their opinions of the Sophists as a class: as thinkers, Aristotle, if the work be his, also misrepresents them.

This may look presumptuous. We have nothing remaining of what the Sophists taught, except the opinions reported by others. These opinions we pronounce to be garbled. And why? The Sophists were wealthy; the Sophists were powerful; the Sophists were dazzling, rhetorical, but shallow. Interrogate human nature—above all the nature of philosophers—and ask what will be the sentiment entertained respecting these Sophists by their contemporaries? Ask the solitary thinker what is his opinion of the showy, powerful, but shallow rhetorician, who usurps the attention of the world. The man of convictions has at all times a superb contempt for the man of mere oratorical, or dialectical display. The Thinker knows that the world is ruled by Thought; yet he sees Expression gaining the world's attention. He knows perhaps that he has within him thoughts pregnant with human welfare; yet he sees the giddy multitude drunk with the enthusiasm excited by some daring sophism, clothed in enchanting language. He sees through the sophism, but cannot make others as clear-sighted. His warning is unheeded. His wisdom is spurned. His ambition is frustrated. The popular Idol is carried onward in triumph. Now the Thinker would not be human if he bore this with equanimity. He does not bear it. He is loud and angry in lamenting the fate of a world that can so be led; loud and angry in his contempt of one who could so lead it. Should he become the critic or historian

of his age, what exactness ought we to expect in his account of the popular idol?

Somewhat of this kind was the relation in which the Sophists and Philosophers stood to each other.

The Sophists were hated by some because powerful, by others because shallow. They were misrepresented by all. In later times, their antagonism to Socrates has brought them ill-will; and this ill-will is strengthened by the very prejudice of the name. Could a Sophist be other than a cheat and a liar? As well ask, could a Devil be other than Evil? In the name of Sophist all odious qualities are implied; and this implication perverts our judgment. Call the Sophists Professors of Rhetoric, which is their truest designation, and then examine their history; it will produce a very different impression.

We said it was a paradox to maintain that the Sophists really promulgated the opinions usually attributed to them. And by this we mean that not only are some of those opinions nothing but caricatures of what was really maintained, but, also, that in our interpretation of the others we grossly err, by a confusion of Christian with Heathen views of morality. Moderns cannot help regarding as fearfully immoral, ideas which, by the Greeks, were regarded as moral, or, at least, as not disreputable. For instance: the Greek orators are always careful to impress upon their audience, that in bringing a charge against any one, they are actuated by the strongest personal motives; that they have been injured by the accused; that they have good honest hatred, as a motive, for accusing him. Can anything be more opposite to Christian feeling? A Christian accuser is just as anxious to extricate

himself from any charge of being influenced by personal considerations as the Greek was of making the contrary evident. A Christian seeks to place his motive to the account of abstract justice; and his statement would be received with great suspicion were it known that a personal feeling prompted it. The reason is that the Christian Ethics do not countenance vengeance; the Greek Ethics not only countenanced vengeance, but very much reprobated *informers*: consequently, whoever made an accusation had to clear himself from the ignominy of being an informer, and, to do so, he showed his personal motives.

This example will prepare the reader to judge, without precipitancy, the celebrated boast of the Sophists, that they could "make the worse appear the better reason." This was the grand aim of their endeavours. This was their avowed object. To teach this art they demanded enormous sums; to learn it enormous sums were readily given, and given by many.

Now, understanding this object *as moderns have understood it*, and thereby forming our notion of the Sophists, let us ask: Is it credible that such an art should have been avowed, and, being avowed, should be rewarded, in a civilized state? Let us think, for an instant, of what are its moral, or rather its immoral, consequences. Let us reflect how utterly it destroys all morality; how it makes the very laws but playthings for dialectical subtlety. Then let us ask whether, with our opinions respecting its morality, any state could have allowed such open blasphemy—such defiance to the very fundamental principle of honesty and integrity—such demolition of the social contract?

Could any state do this ; and was Athens that state ? We ask the reader to realize for himself some notion of the Athenians as citizens, not merely as statues ; to think of them as human beings, full of human passions, not simply as architects, sculptors, poets, and philosophers. Having done this, we ask him whether he can believe that these Athenians would have listened to a man proclaiming all morality a farce, and all law a quibble—proclaiming that for a sum of money he could instruct any one how to make an unjust cause appear a just one ? Would not such a proclamation be answered with a shout of derision, or of execration, according to the belief in his sincerity ? Could any charlatan, in the corruptest age, have escaped lapidation for such effrontery ? Yet the Sophists were enormously wealthy, by many greatly admired, and were selected as ambassadors on very delicate missions. They were men of splendid talents, of powerful connexions. Around them flocked the rich and noble youth of every city they entered. They were the intellectual leaders of their age. If they were what their adversaries describe them, Greece could only have been an earthly Pandemonium, where Belial was King.

To believe this is beyond our power. Such a paradox it would be frivolous to refute, had it not been maintained for centuries. Some have endeavoured to escape it by maintaining that the Sophists were held in profound contempt, and certain passages are adduced from Plato in proof of this. But the fact appears to us to be the reverse of this. The great wealth and power of the Sophists—the very importance implied in Plato's constant polemic against them—prove that they were not objects of

contempt. Objects of aversion they might be to one party; the successful always are. Objects of contempt they might be, to some sincere and profound thinkers. But the question here is not one relating to individuals, but to the State. It is not whether Plato despised Gorgias, but whether Athens allowed him to teach the most unblushing and undisguised immorality. There have been daring speculators in all times. There have been men shameless and corrupt. But that there has been any speculator so daring as to promulgate what he knew to be grossly immoral, and so shameless as to avow it, is in such contradiction to our experience of human nature as at once to be rejected.*

It is evident, therefore, that in teaching the art of "making worse appear the better reason," the Sophists were not guilty of any thing reprehensible to a Greek; however serious thinkers, such as Socrates and Plato, might detest the shallow philosophy from which it sprung; and their detestation was owing to their love of truth, which the Sophists outraged.

It may not be easy to make the reader understand how such doctrines could be regarded as otherwise than moral. But we will try. If he is familiar with Mr. Macaulay's brilliant and searching article on Machiavelli, he will at once see how such doctrines might have been held by very virtuous men. If he has not already made himself acquainted with that masterly performance, the following extracts

* We are told by Sextus that Protagoras was condemned to death by the Athenians because he professed himself unable to say whether the Gods existed, or what they were, owing to the insufficiency of knowledge. Yet the Athenians are supposed to have tolerated the Sophists as they are understood by moderns!

will be acceptable both in themselves and in reference to our present subject :—

• “ Among the rude nations which lay beyond the Alps, valour was absolutely indispensable. Without it, none could be eminent, few could be secure. Cowardice was, therefore, naturally considered as the foulest reproach. Among the polished Italians, enriched by commerce, governed by law, and passionately attached to literature, everything was done by superiority of intelligence. Their very wars, more pacific than the peace of their neighbours, required rather civil than military qualifications. Hence, while courage was the point of honour in other countries, ingenuity became the point of honour in Italy.

“ From these principles were deduced, by processes strictly analogous, two opposite systems of fashionable morality. Through the greater part of Europe, the vices which peculiarly belong to timid dispositions, and which are the natural defence of weakness, fraud, and hypocrisy, have always been most disreputable. On the other hand, the excesses of haughty and daring spirits have been treated with indulgence, and even with respect. The Italians regarded with corresponding lenity those crimes which require self-command, address, quick observation, fertile invention, and profound knowledge of human nature.

“ Such a prince as our Henry the Fifth would have been the idol of the North. The follies of his youth, the selfish and desolating ambition of his manhood, the Lollards roasted at slow fires, the prisoners massacred on the field of battle, the expiring lease of priestcraft renewed for another century, the dreadful legacy of a causeless and hopeless war, be-

queathed to a people who had no interest in its event, everything is forgotten but the victory of Agincourt! Francis Sforza, on the other hand, was the model of the Italian hero. He made his employers and his rivals alike his tools. He first overpowered his open enemies by the help of faithless allies; he then armed himself against his allies with the spoils taken from his enemies. By his incomparable dexterity, he raised himself from the precarious and dependent situation of a military adventurer to the first throne of Italy. To such a man much was forgiven—hollow friendship, ungenerous enmity, violated faith. Such are the opposite errors which men commit, when their morality is not a science, but a taste; when they abandon eternal principle for accidental associations.

“ We have illustrated our meaning by an instance taken from history. We will select another from fiction. Othello murders his wife; he gives orders for the murder of his lieutenant; he ends by murdering himself. Yet he never loses the esteem and affection of a Northern reader—his intrepid and ardent spirit redeeming everything. The unsuspecting confidence with which he listens to his adviser, the agony with which he shrinks from the thought of shame, the tempest of passion with which he commits his crimes, and the haughty fearlessness with which he avows them, give an extraordinary interest to his character. Iago, on the contrary, is the object of universal loathing. Many are inclined to suspect that Shakspeare has been seduced into an exaggeration unusual with him, and has drawn a monster who has no archetype in human nature. Now, we suspect that an Italian audience, in the fifteenth century, would have felt very differently.

Othello would have inspired nothing but detestation and contempt. The folly with which he trusts to the friendly professions of a man whose promotion he had obstructed, the credulity with which he takes unsupported assertions, and trivial circumstances, for unanswerable proofs, the violence with which he silences the exculpation till the exculpation can only aggravate his misery, would have excited the abhorrence and disgust of the spectators. The conduct of Iago they would assuredly have condemned ; but they would have condemned it as we condemn that of his victim. Something of interest and respect would have mingled with their disapprobation. The readiness of his wit, the clearness of his judgment, the skill with which he penetrates the dispositions of others and conceals his own, would have insured to him a certain portion of their esteem.

“ So wide was the difference between the Italians and their neighbours. A similar difference existed between the Greeks of the second century before Christ, and their masters the Romans. The conquerors, brave and resolute, faithful to their engagements, and strongly influenced by religious feelings, were, at the same time, ignorant, arbitrary, and cruel. With the vanquished people were deposited all the art, the science, and the literature of the Western world. In poetry, in philosophy, in painting, in architecture, in sculpture, they had no rivals. Their manners were polished, their perceptions acute, their invention ready ; they were tolerant, affable, humane. But of courage and sincerity they were almost utterly destitute. The rude warriors who had subdued them consoled themselves for their intellectual inferiority, by remarking that

knowledge and taste seemed only to make men atheists, cowards, and slaves. The distinction long continued to be strongly marked, and furnished an admirable subject for the fierce sarcasms of Juvenal.

“The citizen of an Italian commonwealth was the Greek of the time of Juvenal and the Greek of the time of Pericles, joined in one. Like the former, he was timid and pliable, artful and unscrupulous. But, like the latter, he had a country. Its independence and prosperity were dear to him. If his character were degraded by some mean crimes, it was, on the other hand, ennobled by public spirit and by an honourable ambition. A vice sanctioned by the general opinion is merely a vice. The evil terminates in itself. A vice condemned by the general opinion produces a pernicious effect on the whole character. The former is a local malady, the latter a constitutional taint. When the reputation of the offender is lost, he too often flings the remains of his virtue after it in despair. The Highland gentleman who, a century ago, lived by taking black mail from his neighbours, committed the same crime for which Wild was accompanied to Tyburn by the huzzas of two hundred thousand people. But there can be no doubt that he was a much less depraved man than Wild. The deed for which Mrs. Brownrigg was hanged sinks into nothing when compared with the conduct of the Roman who treated the public to a hundred pair of gladiators. Yet we should probably wrong such a Roman if we supposed that his disposition was so cruel as that of Mrs. Brownrigg. In our own country, a woman forfeits her place in society by what, in a man, is too commonly considered as an honourable distinc-

tion, and, at worst, as a venial error. The consequence is notorious. The moral principle of a woman is frequently more impaired by a single lapse from virtue, than that of a man by twenty years of intrigue. Classical antiquity would furnish us with instances stronger, if possible, than those to which we have referred.

“ We must apply this principle to the case before us. Habits of dissimulation and falsehood, no doubt, mark a man of our age and country as utterly worthless and abandoned ; but it by no means follows that a similar judgment would be just in the case of an Italian of the middle ages. On the contrary, we frequently find those faults which we are accustomed to consider as certain indications of a mind altogether depraved, in company with great and good qualities, with generosity, with benevolence, with disinterestedness. From such a state of society, Palamedes, in the admirable dialogue of Hume, might have drawn illustrations of his theory as striking as any of those with which Fourli furnished him. These are not, we well know, the lessons which historians are generally most careful to teach, or readers most willing to learn. But they are not, therefore, useless. How Philip disposed his troops at Chæronea, where Hannibal crossed the Alps, whether Mary blew up Darnley, or Siguier shot Charles the Twelfth, and ten thousand other questions of the same description, are in themselves unimportant. The inquiry may amuse us, but the decision leaves us no wiser. He alone reads history aright, who, observing how powerfully circumstances influence the feelings and opinions of men, how often vices pass into virtues, and paradoxes into axioms, learns to distinguish what is accidental and transitory in

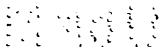
human nature, from what is essential and immutable."

We must refer also to the universal practice of ancient rhetorical writers, who all inculcated this sophistical art. Even Aristotle, who certainly loved truth as much as any man, in his 'Organon,' after examining the means of investigating truth, adds what he calls the Topics, in which he teaches the art of discussion without any reference whatever to truth: indeed, he teaches what the Sophists taught; but no one accuses him of being a Sophist.

The Sophists taught the art of disputation. The litigious quibbling nature of the Greeks was the soil on which an art like that was made to flourish. The excess of the Greek love of law-suits is familiar to all who are versed in Grecian history. The almost farcical representation of a law-suit given by Æschylus, in his otherwise awful drama, The Eumenides, shows with what keen and lively interest the audience witnessed even the very details of litigation. For such an appetite food would not long be wanting. Corax and Tisias wrote precepts of the art of disputation. Protagoras followed with dissertations on the most remarkable points of law; and Gorgias composed a set accusation and apology for every case that could present itself. People, in short, were taught to be their own advocates.

Let us look at home. Does not every Barrister exert his energy, eloquence, subtlety, and knowledge "to make the worse appear the better reason?" Do we reprobate Sergeant Talfourd or Sir Frederick Thesiger, if they succeed in gaining their client's cause, although that cause be a bad one? On the contrary, it is the badness of the cause that makes the triumph great.

Now let us suppose Sergeant Talfourd to give lessons in forensic oratory; suppose him to announce to the world, that for a certain sum he would instruct any man in the whole art of exposition and debate, of the interrogation of witnesses, of the tricks and turning points of the law, so that the learner might become his own advocate: this would be contrary to legal etiquette; but would it be immoral? Grave men might, perhaps, object that Mr. Talfourd was offering to make men cheats and scamps, by enabling them to make the worse appear the better reason. But this is a consequence foreseen by grave men, not acknowledged by the Teacher. It is doubtless true that owing to oratory, ingenuity, and subtlety, a scamp's cause is sometimes gained; but it is also true that many an honest man's cause is gained and many a scamp frustrated by the same means. If forensic oratory does sometimes make the worse appear the better reason, it also makes the good appear in all its strength. The former is a necessary evil, the latter is the very object of a court of Justice. "If" says Callicles, in defence of Gorgias, to Socrates, "any one should charge you with some crime which you had not committed, and carry you off to prison, you would gape, and stare, and would not know what to say; and, when brought to trial, however contemptible and weak your accuser might be, if he chose to indict you capitally, you would perish. Can this be wisdom, which, if it takes hold of a gifted man, destroys the excellence of his nature, rendering him incapable of preserving himself and others from the greatest dangers, enabling his enemies to plunder him of all his property, and reducing him to the situation of those



who, by a sentence of the court, have been deprived of all their rights?"

If it be admitted that Sergeant Talford's instruction in forensic oratory would not be immoral, however unusual, we have only to extend the sphere to include politics, to represent to ourselves the democratic state of Athens, where demagogues were ever on the alert, and we shall be fully persuaded that the art of the Sophists was not considered immoral; and, as further proof, we select the passage in Plato's 'Republic,' as coming from an unexceptionable source.

Socrates, speaking of the mercenary teachers whom the people call Sophists, says:—"These Sophists teach them only the *things which the people themselves profess in assemblies*: yet this they call wisdom. It is as if a man had observed the instincts and appetites of a great and powerful beast, in what manner to approach it, how or why it is ferocious or calm, what cries it makes, what tones appease and what tones irritate it; after having learnt all this, and calling it wisdom, commenced teaching it without having any knowledge of what is good, just, shameful, and unjust among these instincts and appetites; but calling that good which flatters the animal, and that bad which irritates it; because he knows not the difference between what is good in itself and that which is only relatively good." *

There is the usual vein of caricature in this description (which is paraphrased in the 'Quarterly Review,' † and there given as if the undoubted and unexaggerated doctrines of the Sophists); but it very distinctly sets forth the fact that the Sophists

* Plato, 'Rep,' vi. p. 291.

† No. xlii. p. 289.

did not preach anything contrary to public morals, however contrary to abstract morality. Indeed the very fact of their popularity would prove that they did but respond to a public want ; and because they responded to this want they received large sums of money. Some people believe that the distinguishing peculiarity of the Sophists was their demanding money for their instructions ; and Plato constantly harps upon their being mercenaries ; but he was wealthy, and could afford such sarcasms. The Greeks paid their Musicians, Painters, Sculptors, Physicians, Poets, and Teachers in Schools ; why therefore should they not pay their Philosophers ? Zeno of Elea was paid ; so was Democritus ; but both of these have been sometimes included amongst the Sophists. We see nothing, whatever, derogatory in Philosophers accepting money, any more than in Poets ; and we know how the latter stipulated for handsome payment.

We believe ourselves entitled to conclude that where the Sophists taught the art of disputation, they taught nothing that was considered immoral by the Greeks. No doubt the serious disliked this tampering with truth ; no doubt the old men saw with uneasiness the Athenian youth exercising a dangerous weapon, and foresaw demagogues in all the Sophists' pupils ; but that they did not regard the Sophists as "corrupters of youth," and enemies of the State is evident from this striking fact,—the Sophists not only escaped persecution, but were rewarded with wealth and honours ; whereas Socrates was tried, condemned, and executed on the charge of having corrupted the Athenian youth.

We cannot accept Plato's account of his opponents. It is perfectly true that the later Sophists

became a frivolous and shameless race; but the early masters were not so. Plato himself makes the distinction, and speaks of some of the elder teachers with more respect. But he always misrepresents them.

We admit that, at the time Plato wrote, there were still many and powerful Sophists living. It may therefore be argued that he could not have ventured to misrepresent their doctrines when there were living witnesses against him. This is an argument often used in other cases. It is extremely trivial. In the first place do we not daily see instances of gross misrepresentation of opinions, the authors of which are still alive? Is not misrepresentation a thing which cannot be guarded against, being sometimes the effect of party spirit, sometimes that of legitimate dulness? In the second place we have no proof that the disciples of the Sophists did not contradict Plato. It is assumed that they did not, because no works have been transmitted to us in which these contradictions are mentioned. But it might have been done *vivâ voce*.

Plato's account of the Sophistical doctrines is on the face of it a caricature, since it is impossible that any man should have seriously entertained them. It is not what Protagoras and Gorgias thought; it is the *reductio ad absurdum* of what they thought. Plato seizes hold of one or two of their fundamental doctrines, and, *interpreting* them in his own way, makes them lead to the most outrageous absurdity and immorality. It is as if Berkeley's doctrine had been transmitted us by Beattie. Berkeley, it is well known, denied the existence of the external world, resolving it into a simple world

of ideas. Beattie taunted him with not having followed out his principles, and with not having walked over a precipice. This was a gross misrepresentation; an *ignoratio elenchi*: Beattie misunderstood the argument, and drew conclusions from his misunderstanding. Now, suppose him to have written a dialogue on the plan of those of Plato: suppose him making Berkeley expound his argument in such a way as he Beattie interpreted it, and with a flavour of exaggeration for the sake of effect, and of absurdity for the sake of easy refutation: how would he have made Berkeley speak? Somewhat thus:—"Yes; I maintain that there is no such external existence as that which men vulgarly believe in. There is no world of matter, but only a world of ideas. If I were to walk over a precipice I should receive no injury: it is only an ideal precipice."

This is Beattie's interpretation; how true it is most men know: it is, however, quite as true as Plato's interpretation of the Sophists. From Berkeley's works we can convict Beattie. Plato we can convict from experience of human nature; that experience tells us that no man, far less any set of men, could seriously, publicly, and constantly broach doctrines subversive of all morality, without incurring the heaviest penalties. To broach immoral doctrines with the faintest prospect of success, a man must do so in the name of rigid Morality. To teach immorality, and openly to avow that it is immoral, was, according to Plato, the office of the Sophists; * a statement which carries with it its own contradiction.

* In the 'Protagoras' this passage is often referred to as a proof of the shamelessness of the Sophists; and sometimes of

acknowledged
to be

It is absolutely necessary that the opinions attributed to the Sophists should undergo a thorough revision. There are so few data to be trusted that the task must be extremely delicate. We will make a venture in a line where successors may be more fortunate. Our history, inasmuch as it concerns itself with tendencies rather than with individual opinions, will not greatly suffer from the deficiency of information respecting the exact opinion of the Sophists.

Protagoras, the first who is said to have avowed himself a Sophist was born at Abdera, where Democritus first noticed him as a porter, who showed great address in inventing the knot.* The consequence of this was, that Democritus gave him instructions in Philosophy. The story is apocryphal, but indicates a connexion to have existed between the speculations of the two thinkers. Let us suppose Protagoras then to have accepted the doctrine of Democritus, with him to have rejected the unity of the Eleatics and to have maintained the existence of the Many. With this doctrine he also learned that thought is sensation, and all knowledge therefore phenomenal. There were two theories in the system which he could not accept, viz. the *Atomic* and *Reflective*. These two imply each other, in the Democritean system. Reflection is necessary for the idea of Atoms; and it is from the idea of Atoms, not perceived by the the ill-favour with which they were regarded. It is to us only a proof of Plato's tendency to caricature.

* What the real signification of *εὐλῆ* is we are unable to say. A porter's knot, such as is now used, is the common interpretation. Perhaps Protagoras had contrived a sort of board such as the glaziers use, and which is still used by the porters in Italy.

sense, that the existence of Reflection is proved. Protagoras rejected the Atoms, and could therefore reject Reflection. He said, that Thought was Sensation, and all knowledge consequently only individual.

Did not the place of his birth no less than the traditional story lead one to suppose some connexion with Democritus, we might feel authorized to adopt certain expressions of Plato, and consider Protagoras to have derived his doctrine from Heraclitus. He certainly resembles the last-named in the main results to which his speculations led him. Be that as it may, the fact is unquestionable, that he maintained the doctrine of Thought being Sensation. Now, what does this doctrine imply? It implies that every thing is true *relatively*—every sensation is a true sensation; and, as there is nothing but sensation, knowledge is inevitably fleeting and imperfect. In a melancholy mind such a doctrine would deepen sadness, till it produced despair. In Heraclitus it had this effect. In minds of greater elasticity—in men of greater confidence, such a doctrine would lead to an energetic scepticism or individualism. In Protagoras it became the arrogant formula of “Man is the measure of all things.”

Sextus Empiricus gives the psychological doctrine of Protagoras very explicitly; and his account may be received without suspicion. We translate a portion of it:—

“Matter,” said Protagoras, “is in a perpetual flux;* whilst it undergoes augmentations and

* *ἐν ἑλπίδι μίσησθαι εἶναι*, an expression which, if not borrowed by Sextus from Plato, would confirm the conjecture above respecting Heraclitus, as the origin of Protagoras' system.

losses, the senses also are modified, according to the age and disposition of the body. He said, also, that the reasons of all phenomena (*appearances*) resided in matter as *substrata* (τοὺς λογους πάντων τῶν φαινομένων ὑποκεῖσθαι ἐν τῇ ὕλη); so that matter, in itself, might be whatever it appeared to each. But men have different perceptions at different times, according to the changes in the thing perceived. Whoever is in a healthy state perceives things such as they appear to all others in a healthy state: and *vice versâ*. A similar course holds with respect to different ages, as well as in sleeping and waking. Man is therefore the criterion of that which exists; all that is perceived by him exists, that which is perceived by no man does not exist." *

Now, conceive a man conducted by what he thought irresistible arguments to such a doctrine as the above, and then see how naturally all the scepticism of the Sophists flows from it. The difference between the Sophists and the Sceptics was this: they were both convinced of the insufficiency of all knowledge, but the Sceptics contented themselves with the conviction, while the Sophists gave up philosophy and turned their attention elsewhere. Satisfied with the vanity of all endeavour to penetrate the mysteries of the universe, they began to consider their relations to other men: they devoted themselves to politics and rhetoric.† If there was no possibility of Truth there only remained the possibility of Persuasion. If one opinion was as true as another,—that is, if neither were true,—it was nevertheless desirable, for the sake of society,

* 'Hypoty. Pyrrhon,' p. 44.

† See Plato's definition of the *sophistical art*, 'Sophista,' p. 146.

that certain opinions should prevail; and, if Logic was powerless, Rhetoric was efficient. Hence Protagoras is made to say, by Plato, that the wise man is the physician of the soul. He cannot indeed induce truer thoughts into the mind, since all thoughts are equally true; but he can induce healthier and more profitable thoughts. He can in the same way heal Society, since by the power of oratory he can introduce good useful sentiments in the place of those base and hurtful.*

This doctrine may be false; but is it not a natural consequence of the philosophy of the epoch? It may be immoral; but is it necessarily the bold and shameless immorality attributed to the Sophists? To us it appears to be neither more nor less than the result of a sense of the radical insufficiency of knowledge. Protagoras had spent his youth in the study of philosophy; he had found that study vain and idle; he had utterly rejected it, and had turned his attention elsewhere. A man of practical tendencies, he wanted a practical result. Failing in this, he sought another path. An admirable writer in 'Blackwood's Magazine' said a few years ago that although metaphysics was an excellent study for young men, yet it was fatal to them if they had not settled their doubts before the age of thirty. Here also was a man firmly impressed with the necessity of having something more definite wherewith to enter the world of action. Plato would have called him a Sophist. Plato could see no nobler end in life than that of contemplating the Being—than that of familiarising the mind with the eternal Good, the Just, and the Beautiful—of which all goodness, justice, and beautiful things

* 'Theætetos,' p. 228.

were the images. With such a view of life it was natural that he should despise the scepticism of the Sophists. This scepticism is clearly set forth in the following translation of a passage from the speech of Callicles, in Plato's 'Gorgias':—

“Philosophy is a graceful thing when it is moderately cultivated in youth; but, if any one occupies himself with it beyond the proper age, it ruins him; for, however great may be his natural capacity, if he philosophizes too long he must of necessity be inexperienced in all those things which one who would be great and eminent must be experienced in. He must be unacquainted with the laws of his country, and with the mode of influencing other men in the intercourse of life, whether private or public, and with the pleasures and passions of men; in short, with human characters and manners. And when such men are called upon to act, whether on a private or public occasion, they expose themselves to ridicule, just as politicians do when they come to your conversation, and attempt to cope with you in argument; for every man, as Euripides says, occupies himself with that in which he finds himself superior; that in which he is inferior he avoids, and speaks ill of it, but praises what he excels in, thinking that in doing so he is praising himself. The best thing in my opinion is to partake of both. It is good to partake of philosophy by way of education, and it is not ungraceful in a young man to philosophize. But, if he continues to do so when he grows older he becomes ridiculous, and I feel towards him as I should towards a grown person who lisped and played at childish plays. When I see an old man still continuing to philosophize, I think he deserves to be

flogged. However great his natural talents, he is under the necessity of avoiding the assembly and public places, where, as the poet says, men become eminent, and to hide himself, and to pass his life whispering to two or three striplings in a corner, but never speaking out anything great, and bold, and liberal."

The distinguishing characteristics of the Sophists were their protests against the possibility of science and their art of disputation. As orators, and as travellers, they learned to prefer expression to truth: as orators, because it was their art; as travellers, because in their visits to various cities they could not fail to remark the variety of laws and ordinances in the different States. This variety impressed them with a conviction that there were no such things as Right and Wrong by nature, but only by convention. This, therefore, became a fundamental precept with them. It was but a corollary of their dogma respecting Truth. For man there was no Eternal Right because there was no Eternal Truth; τὸ δίκαιον καὶ τὸ αἰσχρὸν οὐ φύσει ἀλλὰ νομῆ: law was but the law of each city. "That which appears just and honorable to each city, is so for that city, as long as the opinion is entertained," says Protagoras in the 'Theætetes,' (p. 229). This denial of abstract Truth, and abstract Justice, is easily pushed to absurd and immoral consequences; but we have no evidence that such consequences were maintained by the Sophists. Plato often judges them by such consequences; but independently of the want of any confidence in his representations as faithful, we can often detect in Plato himself evidences of the exaggeration of his general statements. Thus, he on various occasions

makes the Sophists maintain that **Might is Right**. Moderns, who always accept him as *positive* testimony, have therefore unanimously repeated this statement. Yet, it is obvious that they could not have held this opinion except in a very qualified form. And, in the first Book of the Republic, Thrasymachus the Sophist is made to explain his meaning; viz., that Justice is the *law ordained by the party which is strongest in the State*. Thus, in a democracy the enactments of the people are the laws: these laws are for their advantage; therefore just. Now, in this admission, by Plato, of a qualification of the abstract formula, "Might is Right," we see evidence of that formula never having been promulgated by the Sophists; it was only an interpretation by Plato. What they meant was this: All law is but convention: the convention of each State is therefore just *for it*; and, inasmuch as any such convention must necessarily be ordained by the strongest party, *i. e.* must be the will of the many; so we may say that justice is but the advantage of the strongest.

It would occupy too much space to pursue our explanation of the Sophistical tenets. The foregoing will, we trust, suffice to show that the tenets attributed to them by Plato are caricatures, and admit of very different explanation. Well might Gorgias exclaim, on reading the Dialogue which bears his name, "I did not recognise myself. The young man, however, has great talent for satire."

In summing up we may observe that the Sophists were the natural production of the opinions of the epoch. In them we see the first energetic protest against the possibility of metaphysical science. This protest, however, must not be confounded

with the protest of Bacon—must not be mistaken for the germ of positive philosophy. It was the protest of baffled minds. The science of the day led to scepticism ; but with scepticism no energetic man could remain contented. Philosophy was therefore denounced, not because a surer, safer path of inquiry had been discovered, but because Philosophy was found to lead nowhither. The scepticism of the Sophists was a shallow scepticism, in which no great speculative intellect could be drowned. Accordingly with Socrates Philosophy again re-asserted her empire.

FOURTH EPOCH.

A NEW ERA OPENED BY THE INVENTION OF
A NEW METHOD.

CHAP. I. THE LIFE OF SOCRATES.

CHAP. II. THE PHILOSOPHY OF SOCRATES.

FOURTH EPOCH.

CHAPTER I.

THE LIFE OF SOCRATES.

WHILST the brilliant but dangerous Sophists were reaping money and renown by protesting against Philosophy, and teaching the word-jugglery which they called Disputation, and the impassioned insincerity which they called Oratory, there suddenly appeared amongst them a strange antagonist. He was a perfect contrast to them morally and physically. They had slighted Truth ; they had denied her. He had made her his soul's mistress ; and, with patient labour, with untiring energy, did his large, wise soul toil after perfect communion with her. They had slighted Truth for Money and Renown. He had remained constant to her in poverty. They professed to know everything. He only knew that he knew nothing. They professed to teach everything, and demanded enormous sums in recompense. He denied that anything could be taught. Yet he believed he could be of service to his fellow-men, not by teaching, but by helping them to learn. His mission was to examine the thoughts of others. This he humorously explained by reference to his mother's profession, viz., that of a midwife. What she did for women in labour he could do for men pregnant with ideas. He was an accoucheur of

ideas. He assisted them in their birth, and; having brought them into light, he examined them, to see if they were fit to live: if true, they were welcomed; if false, destroyed. And for this assistance he demanded no pecuniary recompense; he steadfastly refused every bribe of the kind.

The Sophists were somewhat puzzled with their new antagonist. Who is he?—Socrates, the son of Sophroniscus. What does he?—Converse. For what purpose?—To expose error.

The gorgeous Sophists, in their flowing robes, followed by crowds of eager listeners, treated the poor and humbly-clad Socrates with ineffable contempt. He was rude and ungainly in his movements; unlike all respectable citizens in his habits. Barefoot, he wandered about the streets of Athens absorbed in thought, and sometimes standing still for hours, fixed in meditation! or he strolled into the market-place, and disputed with every one. In appearance he resembled a Silenus. His flattened nose, with wide and upturned nostrils, his projecting eyeballs, his thick and sensual lips, his squab figure and unwieldy belly, were all points upon which ridicule might fasten.

Yet when this Silenus spoke there was a witchery in his tongue which fascinated those whom his appearance had disgusted. And Alcibiades declared that he was forced to stop his ears and flee away, that he might not sit down beside Socrates and “grow old in listening to his talk.” Let us hear Alcibiades describe him:

“I will begin the praise of Socrates by comparing him to a certain statue. Perhaps he will think that this statue is introduced for the sake of ridicule; but I assure you that it is necessary for the

illustration of truth. I assert, then, that Socrates is exactly like those Silenuses that sit in the sculptors' shops, and which are carved holding flutes or pipes, but which, when divided in two, are found to contain withinside the images of the gods. I assert that Socrates is like the satyr Marsyas; that your form and appearance are like these satyrs, I think that even you will not venture to deny; and how like you are to them in all other things, now hear. Are you not scornful and petulant? If you deny this, I will bring witnesses. Are you not a piper, and far more wonderful a one than he? for Marsyas, and whoever now pipes the music that he taught, for that music which is of heaven, and described as being taught by Marsyas, enchants men through the power of the mouth; for, if any musician, be he skilful or not, awakens this music, it alone enables him to retain the minds of men, and from the divinity of its nature makes evident those who are in want of the Gods and initiation. You differ only from Marsyas in this circumstance, that you effect without instruments, by mere words, all that he can do; for, when we hear Pericles, or any other accomplished orator, deliver a discourse, no one, as it were, cares anything about it. But when any one hears you, or even your words related by another, though ever so rude and unskilful a speaker, be that person a woman, man, or child, we are struck and retained, as it were, by the discourse clinging to our mind.

“ If I was not afraid that I am a great deal too drunk, I would confirm to you by an oath the strange effects which I assure you I have suffered from his words, and suffer still; for, when I hear him speak, my heart leaps up far more than the

hearts of those who celebrate the Corybantic mysteries; my tears are poured out as he talks, a thing I have seen happen to many others beside myself. I have heard Pericles and other excellent orators, and have been pleased with their discourses, but I suffered nothing of this kind; nor was my soul ever on those occasions disturbed and filled with self-reproach, as if it were slavishly laid prostrate. But this Marsyas here has often affected me in the way I describe, until the life which I lead seemed hardly worth living. Do not deny it Socrates; for I well know that if even now I chose to listen to you, I could not resist, but should again suffer the same effects; for, my friends, he forces me to confess, that while I myself am still in want of many things, I neglect my own necessities, and attend to those of the Athenians. I stop my ears, therefore, as from the Syrens, and flee away as fast as possible, that I may not sit down beside him and grow old in listening to his talk; for this man has reduced me to feel the sentiment of shame, which I imagine no one would readily believe was in me: he alone inspires me with remorse and awe; for I feel in his presence my incapacity of refuting what he says, or of refusing to do that which he directs; but, when I depart from him, the glory which the multitude confers overwhelms me. I escape, therefore, and hide myself from him, and when I see him I am overwhelmed with humiliation, because I have neglected to do what I have confessed to him ought to be done; and often and often have I wished that he were no longer to be seen among men. But if that were to happen, I well know that I should suffer far greater pain; so that where I can turn, or what I can do with this man, I know not. All

this have I and many others suffered from the pings of this satyr.

“And observe how like he is to what I said, and what a wonderful power he possesses. I know that there is not one of you who is aware of the real nature of Socrates; but, since I have begun, I will make him plain to you. You observe how passionately Socrates affects the intimacy of those who are beautiful, and how ignorant he professes himself to be; appearances in themselves excessively Silenic. This, my friends, is the external form with which, like one of the sculptured Sileni, he has clothed himself; for, if you open him, you will find within admirable temperance and wisdom: for he cares not for mere beauty, but despises more than any one can imagine all external possessions, whether it be beauty or wealth, or glory, or any other thing for which the multitude felicitates the possessor. He esteems these things, and us who honour them, as nothing, and lives among men, making all the objects of their admiration the playthings of his irony. But I know not if any one of you have ever seen the divine images which are within, when he has been opened and is serious. I have seen them, and they are so supremely beautiful, so golden, so divine, and wonderful, that everything which Socrates commands surely ought to be obeyed, even like the voice of a God.

“Many other and most wonderful qualities might well be praised in Socrates, but such as these might singly be attributed to others. But that which is unparalleled in Socrates, is, that he is unlike, and above comparison, with all other men, whether those who have lived in ancient times, or those who exist now; for, it may be conjectured, that Bra-

sidas and many others are such as was Achilles. Pericles deserves comparison with Nestor and Antenor; and other excellent persons of various times may, with probability, be drawn into comparison with each other. But to such a singular man as this, both himself and his discourses are so uncommon, no one, should he seek, would find a parallel among the present or the past generations of mankind; unless they should say that he resembled those with whom I lately compared him; for, assuredly, he and his discourses are like nothing but the Silen and the satyrs. At first I forgot to make you observe how like his discourses are to those satyrs when they are opened; for, if any one will listen to the talk of Socrates, it will appear to him at first extremely ridiculous; the phrases and expressions which he employs fold around his exterior the skin, as it were, of a rude and wanton Satyr. He is always talking about great market-asses, and brass-founders, and leather-cutters, and skin-dressers; and this is his perpetual custom, so that any dull and unobservant person might easily laugh at his discourse. But, if any one should see it opened, as it were, and get within the sense of his words, he would then find that they alone of all that enters into the mind of man to utter, had a profound and persuasive meaning, and that they were most divine; and that they presented to the mind innumerable images of every excellence, and that they tended towards objects of the highest moment, or rather towards all, that he who seeks the possession of what is supremely beautiful and good, need regard as essential to the accomplishment of his ambition.

“ These are the things, my friends, for which I praise Socrates.”

This Silenus was to become the most formidable antagonist that the Sophists had encountered; but this is small praise for him who was hereafter to become one of the most revered names in the world's Pantheon—who was to give a new impulse to the human mind, and leave as an inheritance to mankind, the grand example of an heroic life crowned with a martyrdom to Truth.

Everything about Socrates is remarkable: personal appearance, moral physiognomy, position, object, method, life and death. Fortunately, his character and his tendencies have been so clearly pictured in the works of Plato and Xenophon, that although the portrait may be flattered we are sure of its resemblance.

He was the son of Sophroniscus, a sculptor,* and Phænarete, a midwife. His parents, though poor, managed, it is said, to give him the ordinary education. Besides which he learned his father's art. Whether he made any progress in it we are unable to say: probably not, as he relinquished it early. There was a report, alluded to by Timon, that the Graces which Socrates had executed found a place on the walls of the Acropolis, close behind the Minerva of Phidias. If this were authentic, it would imply great proficiency in the art. The more creditable account, however, is that in Diogenes Laertius, on the authority of Demetrius Crito, a wealthy Athenian, charmed with the manners of Socrates, is said to have withdrawn him from the shop, and to have educated him (*καὶ παιδεύσαι*).

* Dr. Wiggers says, that Timon the Sillograph calls Socrates, with a sneer, *λιθεῖος*, "a stone-scraper." He forgets that *λιθεῖος* was one of the names for a sculptor, as Lucian informs us in the account of his early life.

This Crito afterwards became a reverential disciple of the great genius he had discovered.

No credit whatever can be given to the statements which make Socrates a disciple of Anaxagoras and Archelaus. With respect to Parmenides, we agree with Dr. Wiggers, that, in spite of the ambiguous phrase in Plato's 'Sophista' (p. 169), there is reason to believe that Socrates never attended his lectures, though he must have read his works. If we are to trust the passage in the 'Meno' (p. 96), Prodicus taught him Oratory; and the passage seems supported by that in 'Æschines' (iii. c.). But they are both directly at variance with what Socrates is made to say in Xenophon's 'Convivium' (i. 5), where he denies having gained any instruction from Protagoras, Prodicus, or others.*

Of his early studies we only know that they were directed to Physics, and left him dissatisfied. "When I was young," said he, "I had an astonishing longing for that kind of knowledge called Physics." This is sufficient answer to those who accuse Aristophanes of gross ignorance when, in the 'Clouds,' he represented Socrates as speculating on physical subjects. Socrates relinquished such speculations later in life; but there is abundant evidence to prove that he only relinquished them on finding them lead to scepticism.

He did not commence teaching till about the middle of his career. We have but few records of the events which filled up the period between his first leaving his father and his first teaching. One

* "You disdain me because you have squandered money upon Protagoras, Gorgias, Prodicus, and so many others, in return for their teaching; whereas I am forced to draw my philosophy from my own brain."

of these was his marriage with Xanthippe and the domestic squabbles which ensued. She bore him two children, and he bore with her temper. Indeed, the violence of her temper and the equanimity with which he submitted to it are proverbial. She has become a type. Her name is synonymous with Shrew. He gave a playful explanation of his choice by remarking, that "those who wish to become skilled in horsemanship select the most spirited horses; after being able to bridle those, they believe they can bridle all others. Now, as it is my wish to live and converse with men, I married this woman, being firmly convinced that in case I should be able to endure her, I should be able to endure all others."*

Before he gave himself up to teaching, he performed military service in three battles, and distinguished himself in each. In the first, the prize of bravery was awarded to him. He relinquished his claim in favour of Alcibiades, whom it might encourage to deserve such honour. Various anecdotes are related of him during his campaigns. In spite of the severity of winter, when the ice and snow were thick upon the ground, he went bare-foot, and lightly clad. On one occasion he stood before the camp for four-and-twenty hours on the same spot wrapped in meditation. Plato has given us a beautiful description of Socrates during the campaign, which we give in the magnificent translation by Shelley:—

"At one time we were fellow-soldiers, and had our mess together in the camp before Potidæa. Socrates there overcame not only me, but every one besides, in endurance of toils: when, as often hap-

* Xenophon, 'Convivium,' ii.

pens in a campaign, we were reduced to few provisions, there were none who could sustain hunger like Socrates; and, when we had plenty, he alone seemed to enjoy our military fare. He never drank much willingly; but, when he was compelled he conquered all even in that to which he was least accustomed, and, what is most astonishing, no person ever saw Socrates drunk either then or at any other time. In the depth of winter (and the winters there are excessively rigid) he sustained calmly incredible hardships: and, amongst other things, whilst the frost was intolerably severe, and no one went out of their tents, or, if they went out, wrapt themselves up carefully, and put fleeces under their feet, and bound their legs with hairy skins, Socrates went out only with the same cloak on that he usually wore, and walked bare-foot upon the ice; more easily, indeed, than those who had sandalled themselves so delicately: so that the soldiers thought that he did it to mock their want of fortitude. It would indeed be worth while to commemorate all that this brave man did and endured in that expedition.

“In one instance he was seen early in the morning standing in one place rapt in meditation, and, as he seemed not to be able to unravel the subject of his thoughts, he still continued to stand as inquiring and discussing within himself; and, when noon came, the soldiers observed him, and said to one another: ‘Socrates has been standing there thinking, ever since the morning.’ At last some Ionians came to the spot, and, having supped, as it was summer, bringing their blankets, they lay down to sleep in the cool: they observed that Socrates continued to stand there the whole night until

morning, and that, when the sun rose, he saluted it with a prayer, and departed.

“ I ought not to omit what Socrates is in battle ; for, in that battle after which the generals decreed to me the prize of courage, Socrates alone of all men was the saviour of my life, standing by me when I had fallen and was wounded, and preserving both myself and my arms from the hands of the enemy. On that occasion I entreated the Generals to decree the prize, as it was most due to him. And this, O Socrates, you cannot deny, that the Generals wishing to conciliate a person of my rank, desired to give me the prize, you were far more earnestly desirous than the Generals, that this glory should be attributed, not to yourself, but me.

“ But to see Socrates when our army was defeated and scattered in flight at Delius, was a spectacle worthy to behold. On that occasion I was among the cavalry, and he on foot, heavily armed. After the total rout of our troops, he and Laches retreated together : I came up by chance, and, seeing them, bade them be of good cheer ; for that I would not leave them. As I was on horseback, and therefore less occupied by a regard of my own situation, I could better observe than at Potidæa, the beautiful spectacle exhibited by Socrates on this emergency. How superior was he to Laches in presence of mind and courage ! Your representation of him on the stage, O Aristophanes, was not wholly unlike his real self on this occasion ; for he walked and darted his regards around with a majestic composure, looking tranquilly both on his friends and enemies ; so that it was evident to every one, even from afar, that whoever should venture to attack him would encounter a desperate re-

sistance. He and his companion thus departed in safety; for those who are scattered in flight are pursued and killed, whilst men hesitate to touch those who exhibit such a countenance as that of Socrates even in defeat."

We must cast a glance at his public career. His doctrine being Ethical, there is great importance in seeing how far it was practical. He proclaimed the supremacy of Virtue over all other rules of life; he exhorted men to a brave and unflinching adhesion to Justice, as the only real happiness; he declared that the unjust alone are unhappy. Was he virtuous, was he happy? This question is pertinent; fortunately it can be answered.

His bravery as a soldier was surpassed by his bravery as a senator. He had that high moral courage which can brave not only death, but opinion. He presents an example, almost unique in history, of a man who could defy a tyrant, and also defy a tyrannical mob; an impetuous imperious mob. The Thirty Tyrants on one occasion summoned him, together with four others, to the Tholos, the place in which the prytanes took their meals. He was there commanded to bring Leon of Salamis to Athens. Leon had obtained the right of Athenian citizenship, but, fearing the rapacity of the Tyrants, had retired to Salamis. To bring back Leon Socrates steadily refused. He says himself, that the "Government, although it was so powerful, did not frighten me into doing anything unjust; but, when we came out of the Tholos, the four went to Salamis and took Leon, but I went away home. And perhaps I should have suffered death on account of this, if the Government had not soon been broken up."

On another occasion he braved the clamorous

mob. He was then a Senator, the only State office he ever held. The Athenian senate consisted of the Five Hundred who were elected from the ten tribes. Every thirty-fifth or thirty-sixth day, one tribe had the presidency: these were called *prytanes*. Of the fifty prytanes, ten had the presidency every seven days; each day one of these ten enjoyed the highest dignity, with the name of *epistates*. He laid everything before the assembly of the people, put the question to the vote, examined the votes, and, in short, conducted the whole business of the assembly. He enjoyed this power, however, only for a single day; for that day he was invested with the keys of the citadel and the treasury of the republic.

Socrates was *epistates* on the day when the unjust sentence was to be passed on the admirals who had neglected to bury the dead after the battle of Arginusæ. To take care of the burial of the dead was a sacred duty. The shades of the unburied were believed to wander restlessly for a hundred years on the banks of the Styx. The 'Antigone' of Sophocles is founded on the sacredness of this duty. After the battle of Arginusæ, a violent storm arose, which prevented the admirals from obtaining the bodies of the slain. In order to remedy this, they left behind them some inferior officers (*taxiarchs*) to attend to the office. But the violence of the storm rendered it impossible. The admirals were tried. They produced the evidence of pilots to show that the tempest had rendered the burial impracticable; besides which, they had left the *taxiarchs* behind, so that the blame, if any, ought to fall on the latter. This produced its natural effect on the people, who would instantly have given

an acquittal, if put to the vote. But the accusers managed to adjourn the assembly, pretending that it was too dark to count the show of hands. In the mean while the enemies of the admirals did all they could to inflame the minds of the people. The lamentations and mournful appearance of the kinsmen of the slain, who had been hired for the tragic scene, had a powerful influence on the assembly. The votes were to be given on the general question, whether the admirals had done wrong in not taking up the bodies of the dead; and, if they should be condemned by the majority (so the senate ordained), they were to be put to death and their property confiscated. But to condemn all by one vote was contrary to law. The prytanes, with Socrates at their head, refused to put the illegal question to the vote. The people became furious, and loudly demanded that those who resisted their pleasure, should themselves be brought to trial. The prytanes wavered, yielded. Socrates alone remained firm, defying the threats of the mob. He stood there to administer justice. He would not administer injustice. In consequence of his refusal, the question could not be put to the vote, and the assembly was again adjourned. The next day a new epistates and other presidents were chosen, and the admirals were condemned.*

It was impossible for the queer-looking Socrates to enter the market-place without at once becoming an object of attention. His Silenus figure, his moral character, and his bewitching tongue, excited and enchained curiosity. He became known to every citizen. Who had not listened to him? Who had not enjoyed his inimitable irony? Who had not

* 'Wiggers,' pp. 51-55.

seen him demolish the arrogance and pretension of some sophist? He was a prodigious talker; to many, doubtless, a prodigious bore. The last sentence may sound somewhat disrespectful. It was not meant so. Socrates must have been a bore to all people who believed that they were wise, because they could discourse fluently; and these were not few. He always declared that he knew nothing. When you professed knowledge on any point, especially if admiring crowds gave testimony to that profession, Socrates was sure to step up to you, and, professing ignorance, entreat to be taught. Charmed with so humble a listener, you began. Interrogated, you unsuspectingly assented to some very evident proposition; a conclusion from that, almost as evident, next received your assent. From that moment you were lost. With great power of logic, with great ingenious subtlety, and sometimes with daring sophistication, a web was formed from which you could not extricate yourself. Your own admissions were proved to lead to monstrous conclusions; these conclusions you repugned, but could not see where the gist of the sophism lay. The laughter of all bystanders bespoke your defeat. Before you was your adversary, imperturbably calm, apparently innocent of all attempt at making you ridiculous. Confused, but not confuted, you left the spot indignant with yourself, but more indignant with the sophistry of your adversary.

It was thus that Socrates became mistaken for a Sophist; but he was distinguished from the Sophists by his constant object. Whilst they denied the possibility of truth, he only sought to make truth evident, in the ironical, playful, and, sometimes, quibbling manner in which he destroyed the argu-

ments of opponents. Truth was his object, even in his lightest moments.

This sort of disputation daily occurred in Athens ; and to it we doubtless owe the comedy of 'The Clouds,' in which Aristophanes uniformly speaks of Socrates as a Sophist. No one will doubt that to his adversaries he must have been a "bore of the first magnitude." And this was the meaning of our calling him so. No one was safe from his attack. No one who presumed to know anything could escape him.

In confirmation, let us quote the account Socrates gives of his procedure, as reported by Plato in the 'Apology.' Socrates there describes his sensations on hearing that Apollo had declared him to be the wisest of men. He could not understand this. Knowing himself to be wise in nothing, yet not daring to think the words of the god could be false, he was puzzled. "I went to one of those who are esteemed to be wise, thinking that here, if anywhere, I should prove the oracle to be wrong, and to be able to say, 'Here is a man wiser than I.' After examining this man (I need not name him, but he was one of the politicians), and conversing with him, it was my opinion that this man *seemed* to many others, and especially to himself, to be wise, but *was* not so. Thereupon I tried to convince him that he thought himself wise, but was not. By this means I offended him and many of the bystanders. When I went away, I said to myself, 'I am wiser than this man ; for neither of us, it would seem, knows anything valuable : but he, not knowing, fancies he does know ; I, as I really do not know, so I do not think I know. I seem, therefore, to be in one small matter wiser than he.'

After this I went to another still wiser than he, and came to the same result ; and by this I affronted him too, and many others. I went on in the same manner, perceiving with sorrow and fear that I was making enemies ; but it seemed necessary to postpone all other considerations to the service of the god, and therefore to seek for the meaning of the oracle by going to all who appeared to know anything. And, O Athenians, the impression made on me was this : The persons of most reputation seemed to me nearly the most deficient of all ; other persons of much smaller account seemed much more rational.

“ When I had done with the politicians, I went to the poets, tragic, dithyrambic, and others, thinking that I should surely find myself less knowing than they. Taking up those of their poems which appeared to me most laboured, I asked them (that I might at the same time learn something from them) what these poems meant ? I am ashamed, O Athenians, to say the truth, but I must say it ; there was scarcely a person present who could not have spoken better concerning their poems than they. I soon found that what poets do, they accomplish not by wisdom, but by a kind of natural turn, and an enthusiasm like that of prophets and those who utter oracles ; for these, too, speak many fine things, but do not know one particle of what they speak.

“ Lastly, I resorted to artificers ; for I was conscious that I myself knew, in a manner, nothing at all, but should find them knowing many valuable things. And in this I was not mistaken ; they knew things which I knew not, and were, so far, wiser than I. But they appeared to me to fall into

the same error as the poets; each, because he was skilled in his own art, insisted upon being the wisest man in other and greatest things; and this mistake of theirs overshadowed what they possessed of wisdom. From this search, O Athenians, the consequences to me have been, on the one hand, many enmities, and of the most formidable kind, which have brought upon me many false imputations; but, on the other hand, the name and general repute of a wise man."

Socrates, like Dr. Johnson, did not care for the country. "Sir," said the Doctor, "when you have seen one green field, you have seen all green fields; sir, I like to look upon men. Let us walk down Cheapside." In words of the same import does Socrates address Phædrus, who accused him of being unacquainted even with the neighbourhood of Athens. "I am very anxious to learn; and from fields and trees I can learn nothing. I can only learn from men in the city." And he was always to be found where men were assembled. Ready to argue with every one, he demanded money from none. He gave no lectures: he only talked. He wrote no books: he argued.* He cannot properly be said to have had a school, since he did not even give a systematic exposition of his doctrine. What has been called his school, must be understood to refer to the many delighted admirers whose custom it was to surround him whenever he appeared, to talk with him as often as possible, and to accept his leading opinions.

* We are, therefore, disposed to accept as historical, the language Plato puts into his mouth respecting the inefficiency of books. Books cannot be interrogated, cannot answer; therefore, cannot teach. We can only learn from them that which we knew before.—*Phædrus*, p. 96.

Although Socrates was a knight-errant of philosophy, ever on the alert to rescue some forlorn truth from the dungeons of prejudice, and therefore was not scrupulous as to who or what his adversary might be, yet his especial enemies were the Sophists. He never neglected an opportunity of refuting them. He combated them with their own weapons, and on their own ground. He knew all their tactics. He knew their strength and their weakness. Like them he had studied Physics, in the speculations of the early thinkers; and like them had seen that these speculations led to no certainty. But he had not, like them, made scepticism a refuge; he had not proclaimed Truth to be a Phantom, because he could not embrace her. No: defeated in his endeavour to penetrate the mysteries of the world *without*, he turned his attention to the world *within*. For Physics he substituted Morals. The certitude which he failed to gain respecting the operations of nature, had not shaken his conviction of the certitude of the moral truths which his conscience irresistibly impressed upon his attention. The world of sense might be fleeting and deceptive. The voice of conscience could not deceive. Turning his attention inwards, he discovered certain truths which admitted of no question. They were eternal, immutable, evident. These he opposed to the scepticism of the sophists. Moral certitude was the rock upon which his shipwrecked soul was cast. There he could repose in safety. From its heights he could survey the world, and his relation to it.

Thus was his life spent. In his two-and-seventieth year he had to appear before his judges to answer the accusations of Impiety and Immorality. He appeared, and was condemned.

When we think upon the character of this great man, whose virtues, luminous in the distance, and surrounded with the halo of imperishable glory, so impose on our imaginations, that they seem as evident as they were exalted, we cannot hear of his trial and condemnation without indignant disgust at the Athenians. But, for the sake of humanity, let us be cautious ere we decide. The Athenians were volatile, credulous and cruel: all masses of men are; and they, perhaps, were eminently so. But it is too much to suppose that they, or any people, would have condemned Socrates had he appeared to them what he appears to us. Had a tyrant committed such a deed, the people would have avenged it. But Socrates was not to them what he appears to us. He was offensive to them, and paid the penalty.

A great man cannot be understood by his contemporaries. He can only be understood by his peers; and his peers are few. Posterity exalts a great man's fame by producing a number of great men to appreciate him.

The great man is also necessarily a reformer in some shape or other. Every reformer has to combat with existing prejudices and deep-rooted passions. To cut his own path, he must displace the rubbish which encumbers it. He is therefore in opposition to his fellow-men, and attacks their interests. Blinded by prejudice, by passion, and by interest, men cannot see the excellence of him they oppose; and hence it is, as Heine so admirably says, "everywhere that a great soul gives utterance to its thoughts there also is Golgotha."

Reformers are martyrs; and Socrates was a reformer. Although, therefore, his condemnation

appears to us very unjust and very frightful, to the Athenians it was no more than the banishment of Empedocles, or the condemnation of Protagoras. Pure as were his intentions, his actions and opinions were offensive. He incurred the hatred of party-spirit; and by that hatred fell. *We* recognise the purity of his intentions; he does not oppose *us*. We can pardon what we believe to be his errors, since those errors wage no war with our interests. How differently were the Athenians situated! To them he was offensive. He hated injustice and folly of all kinds, and never lost an occasion of exposing them. A man who sets up for the critic of his age cannot escape the critic's penalty. Socrates censured freely, openly.

But, perhaps, the most offensive part of his behaviour was the undisguised contempt which he uniformly expressed for the capacity for government assumed by all men. Only the wise, he said, were fit to govern, and they were few. Government is a science, and a difficult science. It is infinitely more difficult to govern a State than to govern the helm of a ship. Yet, the same people who would not trust themselves in a ship without an experienced pilot, not only trust themselves in a State with an inexperienced ruler, but also endeavour to become rulers themselves. This contempt was sufficient to cause his condemnation; but a better pretext was wanted, and it was found in his impiety. His defenders, ancient and modern, have declared that he was not guilty of impiety; and Xenophon "wonders" that the charge could have been credited for an instant. But we believe that the charge was as much merited as in the case of the other philosophers against whom it was

made.* He gave new interpretations to the reigning dogmas; he opposed the mythological interpretations, and that was impiety.

It has been remarked by an anonymous writer, that, in complying with the rites of his country, Socrates avoided her superstitions. The rite of sacrifice, so simple and natural that it harmonises with all and any religious truth, required to be guarded against a great abuse, and against this he warned his countrymen.

“When he sacrificed, he feared not his offering would fail of acceptance in that he was poor; but, giving according to his ability, he doubted not but, in the sight of the gods, he equalled those men whose gifts and sacrifices overspread the whole altar; for Socrates always reckoned upon it as a most indubitable truth, that the service paid the Deity by the pure and pious soul was the most grateful service.

“When he prayed his petition was only this,—that the gods would give to him those things that were good. And this he did, forasmuch as they alone knew what was good for man. But he who should ask for gold or silver, or increase of dominion, acted not, in his opinion, more wisely than one who should pray for the opportunity to fight, or game, or anything of the like nature; the consequence whereof being altogether doubtful, might

* Sextus Empiricus, speaking of the Socratic heresy, calls it *ὡς κεραιλίζουσαν τὸ θείον*.—*Adv. Math.* ii. p. 69.—Plato's ‘Dialogues of the Second Alcibiades’ and the ‘Euthyphro’ are evidence enough of Socrates’ opposition to the Mythology of his day. In the ‘Euthyphro,’ he expressly says that it was because he did not believe the fables recounted of the gods by poets that he was accused of impiety: *Ἰὼ δὲ ὡς ἴσκει, φήσιν τις με ἱεροπράτανον*.—p. 359.

turn, for aught he knew, not a little to his disadvantage."—*Memorabilia*, book i. chap. iii."

It was more difficult for the philosopher either innocently to comply with, or safely to oppose, that part of the popular religion which related to oracles and omens. Socrates appears to have done what was possible, and what therefore was best, towards ultimately correcting this great evil.

"He likewise asserted, that the science of divination was necessary for all such as would govern successfully, either cities or private families; for, although he thought every one might choose his own way of life, and, afterwards, by his industry, excel therein (whether architecture, mechanics, agriculture, superintending the labourer, managing the finances, or practising the art of war), yet even here, the gods, he would say, thought proper to reserve to themselves, in all these things, the knowledge of that part of them which was of the most importance, since he who was the most careful to cultivate his field, could not know, of a certainty, who should reap the fruit of it.

"Socrates, therefore, esteemed all those as no other than madmen who, excluding the Deity, referred the success of their designs to nothing higher than human prudence. He likewise thought those not much better who had recourse to divination on every occasion, as if a man was to consult the oracle whether he should give the reins of his chariot into the hands of one ignorant or well versed in the art of driving, or place at the helm of his ship a skilful or unskilful pilot.

"He also thought it a kind of impiety to importune the gods with our inquiries concerning things of which we may gain the knowledge by

number, weight, or measure; it being, as it seemed to him, incumbent on man to make himself acquainted with whatever the gods had placed within his power: as for such things as were beyond his comprehension, for these he ought always to apply to the oracle; the gods being ever ready to communicate knowledge to those whose care had been to render them propitious."—*Memorabilia*, book i. chap. i.

The trial of Socrates belongs rather to the history of Greece than to the history of Philosophy. It was a political trial. His bearing during the whole period was worthy of him: calm, grave, and touching; somewhat haughty perhaps, but the haughtiness of a brave soul fighting for the truth. It increased the admiration of his admirers, and exasperated his adversaries.

Plato, then a young man, was present at the trial, and has preserved an admirable picture of it in his 'Apology.' The closing speech, made by Socrates after sentence of death had been pronounced, is justly supposed to be pretty faithfully given by Plato. We extract it:—

"It is for the sake of but a short span, O Athenians, that you have incurred the imputation, from those who wish to speak evil of the city, of having put to death Socrates, a wise man (for those who are inclined to reproach you will say that I am wise, even if I am not). Had you waited a short time the thing would have happened without your agency; for you see my years; I am far advanced in life, and near to death. I address this not to all of you, but to those who have voted for the capital sentence, and this too I say to the same persons,—Perhaps you think that I have been condemned for

want of skill in such modes of working upon your minds, as I might have employed with success, if I had thought it right to employ all means in order to escape from condemnation. Far from it: I have been condemned, and not from want of things to say, but from want of daring and shamelessness; because I did not choose to say to you the things which would have been pleasantest for you to hear, weeping, and lamenting, and saying and doing other things which I affirm to be unworthy of me; as you are accustomed to see others do. But neither did I then think fit to do or say anything unworthy of a freeman; nor do I now repent of having thus defended myself. I would far rather have made the one defence and die, than have made the other and live. Neither in a court of justice, nor in war, ought we to make it our object that, whatever happen, we may escape death. In battle it is often evident that a man may save his life by throwing away his arms and imploring mercy of his pursuers; and in all other dangers there are many contrivances by which a person may get off with life if he dare do or say everything. The difficulty, O Athenians, is not to escape from death, but from guilt; for guilt is swifter than death, and runs faster. And now I, being old and slow of foot, have been overtaken by Death, the slower of the two; but my accusers, who are brisk and vehement, by wickedness the swifter. We quit this place: I have been sentenced by you to death, but they having sentence passed upon them, by Truth, of guilt and injustice. I submit to my punishment, and they to theirs.

“But I wish, O men who have condemned me, to prophesy to you what next is to come. I say, then,

-that, immediately after my death, there will come upon you a far severer punishment than that which you have inflicted upon me; for you have done this, thinking by it to escape from being called to account for your lives. But I affirm that the very reverse will happen to you. There will be many to call you to account whom I have hitherto restrained, and whom you saw not; and, being younger, they will give you more annoyance, and you will be still more provoked; for, if you think by putting men to death to deter others from reproaching you with living amiss, you think ill. That mode of protecting yourselves is neither very possible nor very noble: the noblest and the easiest too is not to cut off other people, but so to order yourselves as to attain the greatest excellence.

“Thus much I beg of you: When my sons grow up, punish them, O Athenians, by tormenting them as I tormented you, if they shall seem to study riches, or any other ends, in preference to virtue. And, if they are thought to be something, being really nothing, reproach them, as I have reproached you, for not attending to what they ought, and fancying themselves something when they are good for nothing. And, if you do this, both I and my sons shall have received what is just at your hands.

“It is now time that we depart, I to die, you to live; but which has the better destiny is unknown to all except the God.”

This is very grand and impressive, and paints the character of the man. *Magno animo et vultu carcerem intravit*, says Seneca. He consoled his weeping friends, and gently upbraided them for their complaints at the injustice of the sentence. No man ever faced death with greater calmness;

for no man ever welcomed it as a new birth to a higher state of being with greater faith.

He would have been executed the next day, but it happened that the next day was the first of the festival of Theoria, during which no criminal could be put to death. This festival lasted thirty days. Socrates, though in chains and awaiting his end, spent the interval in cheerful conversation with his friends, and in composing verses. "During this time," says Xenophon, "he lived before the eyes of all his friends in the same manner as in former days; but now his past life was most admired on account of his present calmness and cheerfulness of mind." On the last day he held a conversation with his friends on the immortality of the soul. This forms the subject of Plato's 'Phædon.' The arguments in that dialogue are most probably Plato's own; and it is supposed that the dying speech of Cyrus, in Xenophon's 'Cyropædia,' is a closer copy of the opinions of Socrates.

Phædon, describing the impression produced on him by the sight of Socrates on this final day, says:— "I did not feel the pity which it was natural I should feel at the death of a friend: on the contrary, he seemed to me perfectly happy as I gazed on him and listened to him; so calm and dignified was his bearing. And I thought that he only left this world under the protection of the gods, who destined him to a more than a mortal felicity in the next." He then details the conversation on the immortality of the soul; after which, he narrates the close of that glorious life in language worthy of it. We can only offer the bald version of Taylor; but, even in that, the beauty of the narrative stands manifestly out.

“ When he had thus spoke, he rose, and went into a room, that he might wash himself, and Crito followed him : but he ordered us to wait for him. We waited, therefore, accordingly, discoursing over, and reviewing among ourselves, what had been said ; and sometimes speaking about his death, how great a calamity it would be to us ; and sincerely thinking that we, like those who are deprived of their father, should pass the rest of our life in the condition of orphans. But, when he had washed himself, his sons were brought to him (for he had two little ones, and one considerably advanced in age), and the women belonging to his family likewise came in to him : but, when he had spoken to them before Crito, and had left them such injunctions as he thought proper, he ordered the boys and women to depart ; and he himself returned to us. And it was now near the setting of the sun : for he had been absent for a long time in the bathing-room. But, when he came in from washing, he sat down, and did not speak much afterwards ; for, then, the servant of the eleven magistrates came in, and, standing near him, I do not perceive that in you, Socrates (says he), which I have taken notice of in others ; I mean that they are angry with me, and curse me, when, being compelled by the magistrates, I announce to them that they must drink the poison. But, on the contrary, I have found you at the present time to be the most generous, mild, and best of all the men who ever came into this place : and, therefore, I am now well convinced that you are not angry with me, but with the authors of your present condition. You know those whom I allude to. Now, therefore (for you know what I came to tell you), farewell ! and endeavour to bear this

necessity as easily as possible. And, at the same time, bursting into tears, and turning himself away, he departed.

“ Then Crito gave the sign to the boy that stood near him. And the boy departing, and, having staid for some time, came, bringing with him the person that was to administer the poison, and who brought it properly prepared in a cup. But, Socrates, beholding the man,—It’s well, my friend (says he); but what is proper to do with it? for you are knowing in these affairs. You have nothing else to do (says he) but when you have drunk it to walk about, till a heaviness takes place in your legs, and afterwards lie down: this is the manner in which you should act. And, at the same time, he extended the cup to Socrates. But Socrates received it from him, and, indeed, Echecrates, with great cheerfulness; neither trembling nor suffering any alteration for the worse in his colour or countenance, but, as he was accustomed to do, beholding the man with a bull-like aspect. What say you (says he) respecting this potion? Is it lawful to make a libation of it, or not? We only bruise (says he), Socrates, as much as we think sufficient for the purpose. I understand you (says he); but it is certainly both lawful and proper to pray to the gods,—that my departure from hence thither may be attended with prosperous fortune; which I entreat them to grant may be the case. And, at the same time ending his discourse, he drank the poison with exceeding facility and alacrity. And thus far, indeed, the greater part of us were tolerably well able to refrain from weeping; but, when we saw him drinking, and that he had drunk it, we could no longer restrain our tears. But from me, indeed, notwithstanding the

violence which I employed in checking them, they flowed abundantly; so that, covering myself with my mantle, I deplored my misfortune. I did not, indeed, weep for him, but for my own fortune, considering what an associate I should be deprived of. But, Crito, who was not able to restrain his tears, was compelled to rise before me. And Apollodorus, who, during the whole time prior to this, had not ceased from weeping, then wept aloud, and with great bitterness; so that he infected all who were present except Socrates. But Socrates, upon seeing this, exclaimed:—What are you doing, excellent men? For, indeed, I principally sent away the women, lest they should produce a disturbance of this kind. For I have heard it is proper to die attended with propitious omens. Be quiet, therefore, and summon fortitude to your assistance. But when we heard this we blushed, and restrained our tears. But he, when he found, during his walking, that his legs felt heavy, and had told us so, laid himself down in a supine position. For the man had ordered him to do so. And, at the same time, he who gave him the poison, touching him at intervals, considered his feet and legs. And, after he had vehemently pressed his foot, he asked him if he felt it. But Socrates answered he did not. And, after this, he again pressed his thighs: and, thus ascending with his hand, he showed us that he was cold and stiff. And Socrates also touched himself, and said that when the poison reached his heart he should then leave us. But now his lower belly was almost cold; when, uncovering himself (for he was covered) he said (which were his last words), Crito, we owe a cock to Esculapius. Discharge this debt, therefore, for me, and don't neglect

it. It shall be done (says Crito); but consider whether you have any other commands. To this enquiry of Crito he made no reply; but shortly after moved himself, and the man covered him. And Socrates fixed his eyes. Which, when Crito perceived, he closed his mouth and eyes. This, Echecrates, was the end of our associate; a man, as it appears to me, the best of those whom we were acquainted with at that time; and, besides this, the most prudent and just."

Thus perished this great and good man a martyr to Philosophy. His character we have endeavoured to represent fairly, though briefly. Let us now add the summing-up of Xenophon, who loved him tenderly, and expressed his love gracefully:—

"As to myself, knowing him of a truth to be such a man as I have described; so pious towards the gods, as never to undertake anything without first consulting them; so just towards men, as never to do an injury, even the very slightest, to any one, whilst many and great were the benefits he conferred on all with whom he had any dealings; so temperate and chaste as not to indulge any appetite or inclination at the expense of whatever was modest and becoming; so prudent as never to err in judging of good and evil, nor wanting the assistance of others to discriminate rightly concerning them; so able to discourse upon, and define with the greatest accuracy, not only those points of which we have been speaking, but likewise every other, and, looking as it were into the minds of men, discover the very moment for reprehending vice, or stimulating to the love of virtue: experiencing, as I have done, all these excellencies in Socrates, I can never cease considering him as the most virtuous and the most

happy of all mankind. But, if there is any one who is disposed to think otherwise, let him go and compare Socrates with any other, and afterwards let him determine."—*Memorabilia*, book iv. chap. vii.

After ages have cherished the memory of his virtues and of his fate; but, without profiting much by his example, and without learning tolerance from his story. His name has become a Moral Thesis for School-boys and Rhetoricians. Would that it could become a Moral Influence!

CHAPTER II.

PHILOSOPHY OF SOCRATES.

OPINIONS vary so considerably respecting the philosophy of Socrates, and materials whereby they can be tested are so scanty, that any attempt at exposition must be made with diffidence. The historian has to rely solely on his critical skill; and on such grounds he will not, if prudent, be very confident.

Amongst the scattered materials from which an opinion may be formed are, 1st, The very general tradition of Socrates having produced a revolution in thought; in consequence of which he is by all regarded as the initiator of a new epoch; and by some as the founder of Greek Philosophy, properly so called: 2dly, The express testimony of Aristotle, that he first made use of *definitions* and proceeded by *induction*.* These two positions mutually imply each other. If Socrates produced a revolution in philosophy, he could only have done so by a new Method. That Method we see exhibited in the phrase of Aristotle, but it is there only exhibited in his brief concentrated manner, and requires to be elucidated.

* "There are two things of which Socrates must justly be regarded as the author, the *Inductive Reasoning* and *Abstract Definitions*."—*τοὺς εἰσαγωγικοὺς λόγους καὶ τὸ ὀρίζεσθαι καθόλου.*—*Arist. Met.*, xiii. c. 4. Xenophon has several indications of the inductive method: he also says that Socrates always proceeded from propositions best known to those less known, which is a definition of Induction.

And first of Induction. In our reading for this chapter we have been perpetually amazed at the want of just notions respecting Induction, in general, and Bacon's conception of it, in particular, which prevails amongst historians and critics. Constantly have we stumbled over the assertion that Socrates, *like Bacon*, proceeded inductively. Constantly have we seen him ranked with Bacon; being supposed to have destroyed the vain hypothesis of the physiologists of his day, as Bacon did those of a later day. Now we must insist on a complete revision of such an opinion. The aim and purpose of Socrates was confessedly to withdraw the mind from its contemplations of the phenomena of nature, and to fix it on its own phenomena: truth was to be sought by looking inwards, not by looking outwards. The aim and purpose of Bacon's philosophy was the reverse of this; he exhorted men to the observation and interpretation of nature, and energetically denounced all attempts to discover the operations of mind. If Socrates pushed too far this contempt of physics, Bacon pushed too far his contempt of psychology: the exaggeration was, in each case, produced by the absurdities of contemporaries.

Not more decided is the contrast between their conceptions of Induction. With Socrates it was no more than that *Inductio per enumerationem simplicem*, or "reasoning by analogy"—the mere collection of particular facts—a process which it was Bacon's peculiar merit to have utterly destroyed. The whole force of the 'Novum Organum' may be said to be directed against this erroneous method. The triviality of the method may indeed be seen in the quibbles to which it furnishes support in Plato; it may be seen also in the argument used by Aris-

tippus to justify his living with Laïs the courtesan. "Do you think, Diogenes, that there is anything odd in inhabiting a house that others have inhabited before you?—No. Or sailing in a ship in which many men have sailed before you?—No. By parity of reasoning, then, there is nothing odd in living with a woman whom many men have lived with before." This quibble is a legitimate Socratic induction; and it was made by a pupil of Socrates. It is only a parody of the arguments by which it was proved that to inflict injustice is more painful than to suffer it; one of the many startling dogmas attributed to Socrates. Whoever supposes this Induction to be at all similar to the Baconian Induction (which is an *interrogation* of nature), has singularly mistaken the sense of the 'Novum Organum.' Indeed, to suppose that such a conception as Bacon's could have been originated so early in the history of science, is radically to mistake the course of human development; and to suppose that science is formed by sudden and gigantic leaps, instead of by slow and gradual developments.

Respecting Definitions, which Socrates first rigorously employed, and which Aristotle calls one of the first principles of Science, their value can only be appreciated when the opinions of Socrates are understood. The Sophists had thrown a doubt on knowledge by pointing out the illusory nature of sense-experience, which, they said, constituted all knowledge. They declared that man was only conversant with appearances; and appearances varied according to various conditions. But Socrates, looking inwards, and finding there certain irresistible convictions, certain truths of which he could not doubt; and finding, moreover, that these truths

were not derived through Sense, he at once declared that the fundamental tenet of the Sophists was false. They appealed to the facts of consciousness; he appealed to the deeper and more irrefragable convictions, which were also facts of consciousness. On their own ground he refuted them. But to refute them was only a part of his task. He had not only to show that there was another channel besides Sense; he had to show how that which was above and below sense could be perceived—in other words, he had to explain our knowledge of *essences*: τὸ τί ἐστίν.

How could this be done but by Definitions? To know the essence of a thing you must consider it as distinct from everything else, you must *define* it; by defining it you demarcate it from what it is *not*, and so present the thing before you in its essence.

It was a fundamental conviction with him that it is impossible to start from one true thought, and be entangled in any contradiction with another true thought; knowledge derived from any one point, and obtained by correct combination, cannot contradict that which has been obtained from any other point. He believed that Reason was pregnant with Truths, and only needed an accoucheur. An accoucheur he announced himself; his main instruments were Definitions. By Definition he enabled the thinker to separate the particular thought he wished to express from the myriad of other thoughts which clouded it. By Definition he enabled a man to contemplate the essence of a thing, because he admitted nothing which was not essential into the definition.

This may seem a poor method to the modern reader. Let him not despise it. For centuries it

was the great basis on which speculation rested. We have more than once commented on the natural tendency of the early thinkers to mistake distinctions in words for distinctions in things. We have now to signalize the appearance in the history of speculation of a systematic formula of this. Names henceforth, have the force of things.* A correct Definition is held to be a true description of the Thing *per se*, and the *explanation of terms* as equivalent to the *explanation of things*, and the *exhibition of the nature of any thing in a definition* as equivalent to the *actual analysis of it in a laboratory*—are the central errors of the Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy. These errors continue to flourish in all the metaphysical systems of the present day.

When stated in a naked manner, the absurdity of this method is apparent; but it may be so disguised as to look profoundly scientific. Hence the frequent use of such locutions as that certain properties are “involved in the idea” of certain things; as if being involved in the idea, *i. e.* being included in the definition, necessarily implied a correspondent *objective* existence; as if human conceptions were the faithful copies of external things. The conceptions of men widely differ; consequently different properties are “involved” in these different conceptions; but all cannot be true, and the question arises, Which conception is true? To answer this question by anything like a definition, is to argue in a circle. A principle of certitude must be sought. That principle, however, is still to seek!

The influence of the theory of definitions will

* See Plato's ‘Cratylus’ *passim*.

be more distinctly discernible as we proceed. It is the one grand characteristic of the Method Socrates originated. In it must be sought the explanation of his views of Science.

He has been almost taunted with never having promulgated any system of his own. His rank in the history of philosophy has been questioned; and has been supposed only that of a moralist. A passage of Aristotle has been quoted as decisive on this point: "The speculations of Socrates were only concerning Ethics, and not at all concerning Nature in general" (τῆς ὅλης φύσεως). But this is not *all* the passage: it continues thus: "In these speculations he sought the Abstract (τὸ καθόλου), and was the first who thought of giving definitions." Now in this latter portion we believe there is contained a hint of something more than the mere moralist—a hint of the metaphysician. On turning to another part of Aristotle's treatise (*Met.* xiii. c. iv.), we accordingly find this hint more clearly brought out; we find an express indication of the metaphysician. The passage is as follows: "Socrates concerned himself with ethical virtues, and he first sought the abstract definitions of these. Before him Democritus had only concerned himself with a part of Physics; and defined but the Hot and the Cold. But Socrates, looking deeper, (εὐλόγως) sought the Essence of Things, i. e. sought *what exists.*"

Moreover, in another passage (lib. iii. ch. ii.) he reproaches Aristippus for having rejected science, and concerned himself solely with morals. This is surely negative evidence that Socrates was not to be blamed for the same opinion; otherwise he would have been also mentioned.

Had Socrates been only a moralist, it would be difficult to conceive Plato as his pupil. Socrates made Ethics the end and aim of his philosophy ; and this has given rise to the notion of his being a mere moralist. But his rank in the history of Philosophy is due to him for his conception of science. Let it be remembered that the work of the Sophists had been to destroy all belief in science. They denied the validity of human testimony. They pronounced science to be impossible. It was imperative therefore on Socrates to remove this scepticism before he could proceed. He removed it by presenting a conception of science which was not open to the attacks of the Sophists. Instead of occupying himself with any particular sciences, he directed his attention to science in general—to Method. "Man is the measure of all things," said Protagoras ; and, as men differ, there can be no absolute truth." "Man is the measure of all things," replied Socrates ; "but descend deeper into his personality, and you will find that underneath all varieties there is a ground of steady truth. Men differ, but men also agree : they differ as to what is fleeting ; they agree as to what is eternal. Difference is the region of opinion ; Agreement is the region of Truth : let us endeavour to penetrate that region."

The radical error of all the pre-Socratic philosophy was the want of definite aim. Men speculated at random. They sought truth, but they only built Hypotheses, because they had not previously ascertained the *limits and conditions of inquiry*. They attempted to *form sciences* before having settled the *conditions of Science*. It was the peculiar merit of Socrates to have proposed as the grand

question of philosophy the nature and conditions of Science. His solution of that question was incomplete; but it was influential.

The reader may now begin to appreciate the importance of Definitions in the Socratic Method and may understand why Socrates did not himself invent systems, but only a Method. He likened himself to his Mother, who, though unable to bring forth children herself, assisted women in their labours. He believed that in each man lay the germs of wisdom. He believed that no science could be *taught*; only *drawn out*. To borrow the ideas of another was not to learn; to guide oneself by the judgment of another was blindness. The Sophists, who pretended to teach everything, could teach nothing; and their ignorance was manifest in the very pretension. Each man must conquer truth for himself, by rigid struggle with himself. He, Socrates, was willing to assist any man when in the pains of labour: he could do no more.

Such being the Method, we cannot wonder at his having attached himself to Ethical, rather than to Physical speculations. His philosophy was a realization of the inscription at Delphos—*Know Thyself*. It was in himself that he found the ground of certitude which was to protect him against scepticism. It was therefore moral science which he prized above all others. Indeed, we have great reason to believe that his energetic denouncement of Physical speculations, as reported by Xenophon, were the natural, though exaggerated, conclusions to which he had been hurried by a consideration of the manifold absurdities into which they drew the mind, and the scepticism which they induced. There

could be nothing but uncertainty on such subjects. Certitude was only to be gained in moral speculations.

This is the meaning of the common saying, that Socrates brought Philosophy down from the clouds to domicile it upon earth, or, as Cicero expresses it, "devocavit e caelo et in urbibus collocavit et in domos etiam introduxit et coegit de vitâ et moribusque bonis et malis quærere." He turned the attention from speculations on cosmology to speculations on morals. This is in flagrant contradiction to the representation of Socrates in 'The Clouds.' There he is busy with physical speculations. A contradiction so glaring has led many to suppose that Aristophanes knew nothing whatever of Socrates, but only took him as an available comic type of the Sophists. To this there are several objections. Firstly, it is not usual in Satirists to select for their butt a person of whom they know nothing. Secondly, Socrates, of all Athenians, was the most notorious, and most easily to be acquainted with in a general way. Thirdly, he could not be a type of the Sophists, in as far as related to physical speculations, since we well know those persons scouted physics. Fourthly, he did occupy himself with Physics, early in his career; and probably did so when Aristophanes satirized him. In after life he regarded such speculations as trivial. "I have not leisure for such things," he is made to say by Plato; "and I will tell you the reason: I am not yet able, according to the Delphic inscription, to *Know Myself*; and it appears to me very ridiculous, while ignorant of myself, to inquire into what I am not concerned in."*

* 'Phædrus,' p. 8.

Connected with the Socratic view of Science it is curious to remark how he, who is accused of being only a moralist, always considers Virtue to be identical with Knowledge.* Only the wise man, said he, can be brave, just, or temperate. Vice of every kind is Ignorance; and involuntary, because ignorant. If a man is cowardly, it is because he does not rightly appreciate the importance of life and death. He thinks death an evil, and flees it. If he were wise, he would know that death is a good thing, or, at the worst, an indifferent one, and therefore would not shun it. If a man is intemperate, it is because he is unable to estimate the relative value of present pleasure and future pain. Ignorance misleads him. It is the nature of man to seek good and shun evil: he would never seek evil, knowing it to be such; if he seeks it, he mistakes it for good: if he is intemperate, it is because he is unwise.

It would be superfluous to refute these positions. We may remark, however, that they are grounded on the assumption that man is solely guided by his intellect. The passions are completely overlooked; yet it is their operation in the above cases which interferes with the directing power of the intellect.

We must, in conclusion, say a word or two on that *vexata quæstio*, the Dæmon of Socrates. He taught, and what he taught he believed, that on all critical occasions, especially whenever any danger awaited him or his friends, he was forewarned by a Dæmon who always accompanied him. Re-

* *ἡ φρονησις θεοῦ εἶναι πᾶσας τὰς ἀρετὰς.*—Aristot. *Ethic Nicomach.*, vi. 13. Plato, in the 'Meno,' makes him maintain that Virtue cannot be Science, cannot be taught. But this is not Socratic.

specting the nature of this Dæmon critics are, and probably will remain, at issue. Some agree with Olympiodorus, that it only meant Conscience. But, although the voice of Conscience will often seem to tally with the attributes of the Socratic Dæmon, it will still oftener fail. The Dæmon not only warned Socrates concerning his own affairs, but also concerning the affairs of his friends; as we see in the 'Theages' of Plato. By others, the Dæmon has been held to be purely allegorical; by others, to be a mystical expression for the operations of his soul.

The most probable explanation we take to be this: Socrates was a religious man, and implicitly believed in supernatural communications. This explanation has been too simple for the critics, who have insisted on one more recondite. Yet the above is in perfect accordance with what Plato uniformly says of Dæmons. Apuleius tells us that Plato declared, there was "a peculiar Dæmon allotted to every man, who is a witness and guardian of his conduct in life, who, without being visible to any one, is always present, and who is an arbitrator not only of his deeds, but also of his thoughts." This Dæmon presides over the man inquisitively, participates of all that concerns him, sees all things, understands all things, and dwells in the most profound recesses of the mind.* Xenophon is equally explicit. "The Dæmon," he says, "gave signs" to Socrates, who believed "that the Gods know all things, both those spoken and those

* See the whole passage, together with much other matter, in Professor Long's truly admirable translation of 'Plutarch, i. p. 258. Consult also Plato's 'Apologia,' 'De Legibus,' x. p. 221, and 'Theages,' pp. 275-8.

done, as also those meditated in silence; for they are present everywhere, and give signs (*σημαίνειν*) to men concerning human affairs."—*Memor.*, i. e. i.

Although Socrates was not the first to teach the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, he was the first to give it a philosophical basis. Nor can we read, without admiration, the arguments by which he was wont to prove the existence of a beneficent Providence. Listen to Xenophon:—

"I will now relate the manner in which I once heard Socrates discoursing with Aristodemus, surnamed *the Little*, concerning the Deity; for, observing that he neither prayed nor sacrificed to the gods, but, on the contrary, ridiculed and laughed at those who did, he said to him:—

"Tell me, Aristodemus, is there any man whom you admire on account of his merit? Aristodemus having answered 'Many,'—Name some of them, I pray you. I admire, said Aristodemus, Homer for his Epic poetry, Milanippides for his dithyrambics, Sophocles for tragedy, Polycletes for statuary, and Xeuxis for painting.

"But which seems to you most worthy of admiration, Aristodemus;—the artist who forms images void of motion and intelligence, or one who hath the skill to produce animals that are endued not only with activity but understanding?—The latter, there can be no doubt, replied Aristodemus, provided the production was not the effect of chance, but of wisdom and contrivance.—But since there are many things, some of which we can easily see the use of, while we cannot say of others to what purpose they were produced, which of these, Aristodemus, do you suppose the work of wisdom?—It should seem the most reasonable to

affirm it of those whose fitness and utility are so evidently apparent.

“ But it is evidently apparent that He who at the beginning made man, endued him with senses because they were good for him ; eyes, wherewith to behold whatever was visible ; and ears, to hear whatever was to be heard ; for, say, Aristodemus, to what purpose should odours be prepared, if the sense of smelling had been denied ? or why the distinctions of bitter and sweet, of savoury and unsavoury, unless a palate had been likewise given, conveniently placed, to arbitrate between them and declare the difference ? Is not that Providence, Aristodemus, in a most eminent manner conspicuous, which, because the eye of man is so delicate in its contexture, hath therefore prepared eyelids like doors, whereby to secure it, which extend of themselves whenever it is needful, and again close when sleep approaches ? Are not these eyelids provided, as it were, with a fence on the edge of them, to keep off the wind and guard the eye ? Even the eyebrow itself is not without its office, but, as a penthouse, is prepared to turn off the sweat, which, falling from the forehead, might enter and annoy that no less tender than astonishing part of us. Is it not to be admired that the ears should take in sounds of every sort, and yet are not too much filled by them ? That the fore-teeth of the animal should be formed in such a manner as is evidently best suited for the cutting of its food, as those on the side for grinding it to pieces ? That the mouth, through which this food is conveyed, should be placed so near the nose and eyes as to prevent the passing unnoticed whatever is unfit for nourishment ; while nature, on the con-

trary, hath set at a distance, and concealed from the senses, all that might disgust or any way offend them? And canst thou still doubt, Aristodemus, whether a disposition of parts like this should be the work of chance, or of wisdom and contrivance?— I have no longer any doubt, replied Aristodemus; and, indeed, the more I consider it, the more evident it appears to me, that man must be the masterpiece of some great artificer; carrying along with it infinite marks of the love and favour of Him who hath thus formed it.

“ And what thinkest thou, Aristodemus, of that desire in the individual which leads to the continuance of the species? Of that tenderness and affection in the female towards her young, so necessary for its preservation? Of that unremitting love of life, and dread of dissolution, which take such strong possession of us from the moment we begin to be? I think of them, answered Aristodemus, as so many regular operations of the same great and wise Artist, deliberately determining to preserve what he hath made.

“ But, farther (unless thou desirest to ask me questions), seeing, Aristodemus, thou thyself art conscious of reason and intelligence, supposest thou there is no intelligence elsewhere? Thou knowest thy body to be a small part of that wide extended earth which thou everywhere beholdest: the moisture contained in it, thou also knowest to be a small portion of that mighty mass of waters, whereof seas themselves are but a part, while the rest of the elements contribute out of their abundance to thy formation. It is the soul then alone, that intellectual part of us, which is come to thee by some lucky chance, from I know not where. If so be,

there is indeed no intelligence elsewhere: and we must be forced to confess, that this stupendous universe, with all the various bodies contained therein,—equally amazing, whether we consider their magnitude or number, whatever their use, whatever their order,—all have been produced, not by intelligence, but by chance!—It is with difficulty that I can suppose otherwise, returned Aristodemus; for I behold none of those gods whom you speak of as making and governing all things; whereas I see the artists when at their work here among us.—Neither yet seest thou thy soul, Aristodemus, which, however, most assuredly governs thy body; although it may well seem, by thy manner of talking, that it is chance, and not reason, which governs thee.

“ I do not despise the gods, said Aristodemus: on the contrary, I conceive so highly of their excellence, as to suppose they stand in no need either of me or of my services.—Thou mistakest the matter, Aristodemus; the greater magnificence they have shown in their care of thee, so much the more honour and service thou owest them.—Be assured, said Aristodemus, if I once could be persuaded the gods take care of man, I should want no monitor to remind me of my duty.—And canst thou doubt, Aristodemus, if the gods take care of man? Hath not the glorious privilege of walking upright been alone bestowed on him, whereby he may, with the better advantage, survey what is around him, contemplate with more ease those splendid objects which are above, and avoid the numerous ills and inconveniences which would otherwise befall him? Other animals, indeed, they have provided with feet, by which they may remove

from one place to another ; but to man they have also given hands, with which he can form many things for his use, and make himself happier than creatures of any other kind. A tongue hath been bestowed on every other animal ; but what animal, except man, hath the power of forming words with it, whereby to explain his thoughts, and make them intelligible to others ?

“ But it is not with respect to the body alone that the gods have shown themselves thus bountiful to man. Their most excellent gift is that soul they have infused into him, which so far surpasses what is elsewhere to be found ; for, by what animal, except man, is even the existence of those gods discovered, who have produced and still uphold, in such regular order, this beautiful and stupendous frame of the universe ? What other species of creature is to be found that can serve, that can adore them ? What other animal is able, like man, to provide against the assaults of heat and cold, of thirst and hunger ? that can lay up remedies for the time of sickness, and improve the strength nature has given by a well-proportioned exercise ? that can receive like him information or instruction ; or so happily keep in memory what he hath seen, and heard, and learnt ? These things being so, who seeth not that man is, as it were, a god in the midst of this visible creation ? so far doth he surpass, whether in the endowments of soul or body, all animals whatsoever that have been produced therein ; for, if the body of the ox had been joined to the mind of man, the acuteness of the latter would have stood him in small stead, while unable to execute the well-designed plan ; nor would the human form have been of more use to

the brute, so long as it remained destitute of understanding! But in thee, Aristodemus, hath been joined to a wonderful soul a body no less wonderful; and sayest thou, after this, the gods take no thought for me? What wouldst thou then more to convince thee of their care?

“I would they should send and inform me, said Aristodemus, what things I ought or ought not to do, in like manner as thou sayest they frequently do to thee.—And what then, Aristodemus? supposest thou, that when the gods give out some oracle to all the Athenians they mean it not for thee? If by their prodigies they declare aloud to all Greece—to all mankind—the things which shall befall them, are they dumb to thee alone? And art thou the only person whom they have placed beyond their care? Believest thou they would have wrought into the mind of man a persuasion of their being able to make him happy or miserable, if so be they had no such power? or would not even man himself, long ere this, have seen through the gross delusion? How is it, Aristodemus, thou rememberest or remarkest not, that the kingdoms and commonwealths most renowned as well for their wisdom as antiquity, are those whose piety and devotion hath been the most observable? and that even man himself is never so well disposed to serve the Deity as in that part of life when reason bears the greatest sway, and his judgment is supposed in its full strength and maturity? Consider, my Aristodemus, that the soul which resides in thy body can govern it at pleasure; why then may not the soul of the universe, which pervades and animates every part of it, govern it in like manner? If thine eye hath the power to take in many objects,

and these placed at no small distance from it, marvel not if the eye of the Deity can at one glance comprehend the whole. And, as thou perceivest it not beyond thy ability to extend thy care, at the same time, to the concerns of Athens, Egypt, Sicily, why thinkest thou, my Aristodemus, that the Providence of God may not easily extend itself through the whole universe?

As therefore, among men, we make best trial of the affection and gratitude of our neighbour by showing him kindness, and discover his wisdom by consulting him in his distress, do thou in like manner behave towards the gods; and, if thou wouldst experience what their wisdom and what their love, render thyself deserving the communication of some of those divine secrets which may not be penetrated by man, and are imparted to those alone who consult, who adore, who obey the Deity. Then shalt thou, my Aristodemus, understand there is a Being whose eye pierceth throughout all nature, and whose ear is open to every sound; extended to all places, extending through all time; and whose bounty and care can know no other bound than those fixed by his own creation.

“By this discourse, and others of the like nature, Socrates taught his friends that they were not only to forbear whatever was impious, unjust, or unbecoming before man; but even, when alone, they ought to have a regard to all their actions, since the gods have their eyes continually upon us, and none of our designs can be concealed from them.”—

Memorabilia, book i. chap. iv.

To this passage we must add another equally deserving of attention:—

“Even among all those deities who so liberally

bestow on us good things, not one of them maketh himself an object of our sight. And He who raised this whole universe, and still upholds the mighty frame, who perfected every part of it in beauty and in goodness, suffering none of these parts to decay through age, but renewing them daily with unfading vigour, whereby they are able to execute whatever he ordains with that readiness and precision which surpass man's imagination; even he, the supreme God, who performeth all these wonders, still holds himself invisible, and it is only in his works that we are capable of admiring him. For consider, my Euthydemus, the sun which seemeth, as it were, set forth to the view of all men, yet suffereth not itself to be too curiously examined; punishing those with blindness who too rashly venture so to do; and those ministers of the gods, whom they employ to execute their bidding, remain to us invisible; for, though the thunderbolt is shot from on high, and breaketh in pieces whatever it findeth in its way, yet no one seeth it when it falls, when it strikes, or when it retires; neither are the winds discoverable to our sight, though we plainly behold the ravages they everywhere make, and with ease perceive what time they are rising. And, if there be anything in man, my Euthydemus, partaking of the divine nature, it must surely be the soul which governs and directs him; yet no one considers this as an object of his sight. Learn, therefore, not to despise those things which you cannot see; judge of the greatness of the power by the effects which are produced, and reverence the Deity."—*Memorabilia*, book iv. chap. iii.

And this, together with the ideal character of his ethics, and the heroic character of his life, have

been his great titles to fame. His Method, which constitutes his real philosophical importance, has long since been discarded. If, however, Science has discarded it, History gratefully remembers and immortalizes it. The discovery of to-day will be the common-place of to-morrow; but it is not less a discovery. A Dwarf standing on the shoulders of a Giant sees farther than the Giant; but, if he stood upon his own basis, he would scarcely see at all. It behoves him to remember that the Giant is a Giant.

APPENDIX.

NOTE A.

*Translation of the 5th Chapter of Aristotle's
Metaphysics.*

(The various disputes respecting the doctrines of the Pythagoreans we can scarcely hope to have settled; but that the reader may have the benefit of the greatest authority, and the greatest intellect, on this subject, we translate, here, such portions of the fifth chapter of Aristotle as relate to Pythagoras.)

“ IN the age of these philosophers (the Eleats and Atomists), and even before them, lived those called Pythagoreans, who at first applied themselves to mathematics, a science they improved; and, penetrated with it, they fancied that the principles of mathematics were the principles of all things.

“ Since Numbers are, by nature, *prior* to all things, in Numbers they thought they perceived greater analogies with that which exists and that which is produced (*ἁμοιώματα πολλὰ τοῖς ὄντι καὶ γιγνομένοις*) than in fire, earth, or water. So that a certain combination of Numbers was justice; and a certain other combination of Numbers was the soul and intelligence; and a certain other combination of Numbers was opportunity (*καιρός*); and so of the rest.

“ Moreover, they saw in Numbers the combinations of harmony. Since, therefore, all things seemed formed similarly to Numbers, and Numbers being by nature anterior to things, they concluded that the elements (*στοχεῖα*) of Numbers are the elements of things; and that the whole heaven is an harmony and a Number. Having indicated the great analogies between Numbers, and the phenomena of heaven and its parts, and with the phenomena of the whole world (*τὴν ὅλην*)

διανόημα), they formed a system; and, if anything was defective in their system, they endeavoured to rectify it. Thus, since Ten appeared to them a perfect number, and potentially contains all numbers, they declared that the moving celestial bodies (τὰ φερόμενα κατὰ τὸν οὐρανὸν) were ten in number; but because only nine are visible, they imagined (προούσι) a tenth, the *Anticthone*.

“ We have treated of all these things more in detail elsewhere. If we again speak of them, it is for the sake of establishing what they held to be the Principles of things, and how those Principles were confounded with Causes.

“ They maintained that Number was the Beginning (Principle, ἀρχὴ) of things, the cause of their material existence, and of their modifications and different states. The elements (στοιχεῖα) of Number are Odd and Even. The Odd is finite, the Even infinite. Unity, the One, partakes of both of these, and is both Odd and Even. All number is derived from the One. The heavens, as we said before, are composed of numbers. Other Pythagoreans say there are ten principia, which they thus arrange:—

The finite and the infinite.

The odd and the even.

The one and the many.

The right and the left.

The male and the female.

The quiescent and the moving.

The right line and the curve.

Light and darkness.

Good and evil.

The square and the oblong.

“ All the Pythagoreans considered the elements as material; for the elements are in all things, and constitute the world. . . .

“ The finite, the infinite, and the One, they maintained to be not separate existences, such as are fire, water, &c.; but the Infinite *per se* and the One *per se* are the substances of all things—the essence—the *prima materia* of all things (αὐτὸ τὸ ἄσχετον, καὶ αὐτὸ τὸ ἓν, οὐσίας ἕναι τὸ πᾶν). They began by attending only to the *Form* (Quality, ποιότης τοῦ τί. Aristotle uses τὸ τί for *forma substantialis*, *causa formalis*, as synonymous with τὸ τί ἑστίν, or τὸ τίδε τί, or even εἶδος and μορφή), and began to define it; but on this subject they were very imperfect. They define superficially; and that which suited their

definition they declared to be the essence (*causa materialis*) of the thing defined; as if one should maintain that the double and the number two are the same thing, because the double is first found in the two. But two and the double are not equal (in essence), or, if so, then the one would be many: a consequence which follows from their (the Pythagorean) doctrine."

(We add also a passage from the 7th Chapter.)

"The Pythagoreans employ the Principia and Elements more strangely than even the Physiologists; the cause of which is that they do not take them from sensible things (*αἰσάς οὐκ ἔξ αἰσθητῶν*). However, all their researches are physical; all their systems are physical. They explain the production of heaven, and observe that which takes place in its various parts, and its revolutions; and thus they employ their Principles and Causes, as if they agreed with the Physiologists, that whatever *is*, is *material* (*αἰσθητόν*), and is that which contains what we call heaven.

"But their Causes and Principles we should pronounce sufficient (*ἰκανάς*) to raise them up to the conception of Intelligible things—of things above sense (*ἰκαναβῆναι καὶ ἐπὶ τὰ ἀνωτέρω τῶν ὄντων*); and would accord with such a conception much better than with that of physical things."

This criticism of Aristotle's is a perfect refutation of those who see in Pythagoras the traces of symbolical doctrine. Aristotle sees how much more rational the doctrine would have been had it been symbolical; but his very remark proves that it was not so.

NOTE B.

THIS Note being intended for the critical reader, we give the original of the verses in our text:—

Ὅτι γὰρ ἰκανοὶ ἔχουσιν μελίων πολυκῆμωντων,
 Τῶς νόος ἀνθρώποισι παρεστηκεν. Τὸ γὰρ αὐτὸ
 Ἔστιν ὅστις φρονεῖ μελίων φύσις ἀνθρώποισι.
 Καὶ πᾶσι, καὶ παντί· τὸ γὰρ πλέον ἔστι νόημα.

The last sentence Ritter translates:—

"For thought is the fulness."

Objecting to Hegel's version of τὸ πλίον, "the most," and to that of Brandis, "the mightier," Ritter says the meaning is "the full." But we shall then want an interpretation of "the full." What is it? He elsewhere slightly alters the phrase thus:—

"The fulness of all being is thought."

We speak with submission, but it appears to us that Ritter's assertion respecting τὸ πλίον meaning "the full," or "the fulness," is unwarrantable. The ordinary meaning is certainly "the more," or "the most," and hence used occasionally to signify *perfection*, as in Theocritus:—

καὶ εἰς βασιλικῆς ἐστὶ τὸ πλίον ἴκτο μῶσας.—*Idy.* i. 20.

When Parmenides, therefore, uses the phrase τὸ πλίον ἐστὶ νόημα, he seems to us to have the ordinary meaning in view; he speaks of τὸ πλίον as a necessary consequence of the πολυκάμπτος. Man has many-jointed limbs, *ergo*, many sensations; if he had more limbs he would have more sensations; the highest degree of organization gives the highest degree of thought. This explanation is in conformity with what Aristotle says on introducing the passage; is in conformity with the line immediately preceding:—

ἴσταν ὅτις φρονίσι μελίον φουσι ἀθρόωτοι;

is in conformity with the explanation of the scholiast Asclepias, τὸ πλίον ἐστὶ νόημα, προσγίγνεται ἐν εἰς πλίονος αἰσθήσεως καὶ ἀκριβίστατος; and, finally, is in conformity with the opinion attributed to Parmenides by Plutarch, that "sentir et penser ne lui paraissaient choses distinctes, ni entre elles ni de l'organisation." *

It is on this account we reject the reading of πολυπλάγτων 'far-wandering,' in place of πολυκάμπτων 'many-jointed,' suggested by Karsten. The change is arbitrary and for the worse; πολυπλάγτων having reference only to the feet; whereas the simile in Parmenides is meant to apply to the whole man.

The meaning of the verses is, therefore, that the intelligence of man is formed according to his many-jointed frame, *i. e.*, dependent on his organization.

* Ch. Renouvier 'Manuel de la Philos. Ancienne,' i. p. 152. who cites 'Plutarch, Opin. des Philos.' iv. 5.

NOTE C.

The original of this disputed passage is this:—'Αγαξαγόρας δι' ὃ Κλαζομίνοσ ἐῆ μὲν ἡλικίᾳ πρότιροσ ὦν ταύτω, τοῖσ ἔργοισ ὕστιροσ— which is rendered by MM. Pierron and Zévort: "Anaxagore de Clazoméne, l'ainé d'Empedocle, n'était pas arrivé à un système aussi plausible."—*La Métaphysique d'Aristote*, i. p. 233.

This agrees with our version. We confess, however, that on a first glance M. Cousin's version better preserves the force of the antithesis ἐῆ μὲν ἡλικίᾳ πρότιροσ—τοῖσ ἔργοισ ὕστιροσ. But the reasons alleged in our text prevent a concurrence in his interpretation, and we must look closer. MM. Pierron and Zévort, in their note on the passage, remark: "Mais les mots ἔργω, ἔργοισ, dans une opposition, ont ordinairement une signification vague, comme *re, revera*, chez les Latins, et, chez nous, *en fait, en réalité*." The force of the objection does not strike us. If Anaxagoras was *in fact, in reality*, posterior to Empedocles, we can only understand this in the sense M. Cousin has understood Aristotle; and, moreover, MM. Pierron and Zévort here contradict their translation, which says that, in point of fact, the system of Anaxagoras was not so plausible as that of Empedocles.

More weight must be laid on the meaning of ὕστιροσ, which certainly cannot be exclusively taken to mean posterior in point of time. In the 11th chapter of Aristotle's 5th book, he treats of all the significations of πρότιροσ and ὕστιροσ. One of these significations is superiority and inferiority. In the sense of superiority ὕστιροσ is often used by the poets. Thus Sophocles:—

Ἔμικρόν ἦδοσ, καὶ γυναικὶσ ὕστιροσ.

"O shameful character, below a woman!"

"Inferior" is the primitive meaning; thus, also, we say, "second to none" for "inferior to none."

This meaning of ὕστιροσ, namely, of inferiority, is the one always understood by the commentators on the passage in question; none of them understood a chronological posteriority. πρότιροσ indicates priority in point of time; ὕστιροσ inferiority in point of merit. Thus Philopon: "prior. quidem tempore, sed posterior et manens secundum opinionem," fol. 2 a; and the anonymous scholiast of the Vatican MS.: πρότιροσ γούν τῷ χρόνῳ, ἀλλ' ὕστιροσ καὶ ἰλλείπων κατὰ τὴν δόξαν:

“ first indeed in time, but second *and inferior* in point of doctrine.”

The only question which now remains to be answered in order to establish the proof of the foregoing interpretation of *ὑστέρως*, is this: Did Aristotle regard the system of Anaxagoras as *inferior* to that of Empedocles?

This question we can answer distinctly in the affirmative. The reader will remember our citation of the passage in which Aristotle blames Anaxagoras for never employing his First Cause (Intelligence) except upon emergencies. (see page 130.) Aristotle continues thus: “ Empedocles *employs his causes more abundantly*, though not indeed sufficiently.”
 Καὶ Ἐμπεδοκλῆς ἰσχυρίων μὲν ταῦτα χρῆται τοῖς αἰτίοις, οὐ μὴ οὔτε ἰκανῶς.—*Met.* i. 4.

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